

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

GUZ 18 Job

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - XVIII*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
18 Job
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Job's Character and Wealth

Job 1:1 There was a man named Job, living in the land of Uz, who worshiped God and was faithful to him. He was a good man, careful not to do anything evil.

Job 1:2 He had seven sons and three daughters,

Job 1:3 and owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, one thousand head of cattle, and five hundred donkeys. He also had a large number of servants and was the richest man in the East.

Job 1:4 Job's sons used to take turns giving a feast, to which all the others would come, and they always invited their three sisters to join them.

Job 1:5 The morning after each feast, Job would get up early and offer sacrifices for each of his children in order to purify them. He always did this because he thought that one of them might have sinned by insulting God unintentionally.

Satan Allowed to Test Job

Job 1:6 When the day came for the heavenly beings to appear before the LORD, Satan was there among them.

Job 1:7 The LORD asked him, "What have you been doing?" Satan answered, "I have been walking here and there, roaming around the earth."

Job 1:8 "Did you notice my servant Job?" the LORD asked. "There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil."

Job 1:9 Satan replied, "Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it?"

Job 1:10 You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country.

Job 1:11 But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!"

Job 1:12 "All right," the LORD said to Satan, "everything he has is in your power, but you must not hurt Job himself." So Satan left.

Satan Takes Job's Property and Children

Job 1:13 One day when Job's children were having a feast at the home of their oldest brother,

Job 1:14 a messenger came running to Job. "We were plowing the fields with the oxen," he said, "and the donkeys were in a nearby pasture.

Job 1:15 Suddenly the Sabeans attacked and stole them all. They killed every one of your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

Job 1:16 Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, "Lightning struck the sheep and the shepherds and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

Job 1:17 Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, "Three bands of Chaldean raiders attacked us, took away the camels, and killed all your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

Job 1:18 Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, "Your children were having a feast at the home of your oldest son,

Job 1:19 when a storm swept in from the desert. It blew the house down and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

Job 1:20 Then Job got up and tore his clothes in grief. He shaved his head and threw himself face downward on the

ground.

Job 1:21 He said, "I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The LORD gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!"

Job 1:22 In spite of everything that had happened, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job 1:1-22

Job 1 – Job Endures His Loss

A. Two stages for a great drama: earth and heaven.

1. (1-5) The earthly stage.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East. And his sons would go and feast *in their* houses, each on his *appointed* day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

- a. **There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job:** The Book of Job begins by introducing its central character and the man who perhaps wrote the book by recording his own experiences.

i. The Book of Job is rightly understood to be a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry and Western literature. As the first *poetic* book of the English Bible, Job introduces the reader to the idea of Hebrew poetry, which involves the repetition and combination of *ideas* more than *sounds*.

ii. The author, date, and place of the Book of Job are all uncertain. It may be that Job himself recorded his experiences in the book, or there may well have been another anonymous author. Judging by the style of the Hebrew it uses, some scholars judge Job to be the oldest book of the Old Testament. "Ancient it is beyond all dispute. It probably belongs to the period covered by the book of Genesis; and possibly, to the time of Abraham. Its lesson, therefore, is the oldest lesson we could have; and it takes us back to the first lesson taught in the Bible itself." (Bullinger)

iii. The text of Job is so ancient that in some places we don't really know the exact meaning of some of the words; yet the general meaning is clear. "The disgust expressed in Job's remark that '*ryr hlmwt* is tasteless (Job 6:6) can be appreciated, even though we still do not know what that substance is." (Andersen)

iv. "It is fascinating to think that as we open this text we may be faced with the earliest of all written accounts of a human being's relationship with Yahweh, the one true God." (Mason)

v. The Book of Job is not primarily about one man's suffering and pain; Job's problem is not so much financial or social or medical; his central problem is *theological*. Job must deal with the fact that in his life, God does not act the way he always thought God would and should act. In this drama, the Book of Job is not so much a record of solutions and explanations

to this problem; it is more a revelation of Job's experience and the answers carried *within* his experience.

vi. "It is then, a true and real history that we here have of him, and not a fiction or a moral parable, as some have believed. See a double testimony, for this, the one prophetic, Eze 14:14, the other apostolic, Jas 5:11, and such a well-twined cord is not easily broken." (Trapp)

b. That man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil: The first look at Job shows him to be an exceedingly righteous man. The author gives an impressive description of a man who is not perfect, but certainly complete in his devotion, respect, and obedience to God.

i. Job's connection with God seems to be independent of any other Old Testament character. He definitely seems to have lived before the time of Moses and the people of Israel; perhaps even before Abraham. Some believe that the *Jobab* mentioned in Gen 10:29 is Job, which would put him in the era between Noah and Abraham.

ii. If that was the era of Job, then we can say that Job's deep and true relationship with God was no doubt passed on to him from his ancestors dating back to the time of Noah and his son. In this respect, he was somewhat like Melchizedek (as in Gen 14:18-24) who simply appeared on the scene as someone who was a worshipper and a follower of the true God.

iii. Others point to several reasons for dating Job later, perhaps in the generations after Jacob and Esau.

- *Huz* (*Uz*?) was Abraham's nephew, the son of his brother (Gen 22:21). *The land of Uz* may be named

after him.

- *Eliphaz* (Job 2:11) was the son of Esau (Gen 34:10-11); this son of Esau had a son named *Teman* (Gen 36:10-11), and the descendants of Teman were known for their wisdom (Jer 49:7).
- *Bildad* is called a *Shuhite* (Job 2:11), and Shuah was a son of Abraham through Keturah (Gen 35:2).

iv. This strong statement of the godliness of Job is important to understanding the rest of the story. Recognizing this righteousness of Job “will save us from the mistake of thinking at any point of those experiences as having their explanation in the man himself. Nor for himself did he suffer. His pains were not penalties for wrongdoing: they were not even chastisements for correction.” (Morgan)

v. “Job was ‘blameless.’ This does not mean Job was sinless, but blameless. There is a huge difference. Sin is vertical, blameless is horizontal... as Job lived before the watchful eye of his peers, no one could justly charge Job with moral failure. His reputation was impeccable.” (Lawson)

vi. “The insistence on Job’s uprightness should not be weakened in the interests of a dogma of universal human depravity. Job is not considered to be perfect or sinless. All the speakers in the book, including Job himself, are convinced that men are sinful. Job’s first recorded act is to offer sacrifices for sin. This is not the point. It is possible for sinful men to be genuinely good.” (Andersen)

c. **Seven sons and three daughters were born to him:** In a culture where status and wealth might be measured by the size of one’s family, Job was a man of impressive wealth and status.

d. **His possessions were seven thousand sheep:** By any measure, Job was a prominent and affluent man. His godliness, wealth, and status made it true that this **man was the greatest of all the people of the East.**

i. "Much later in the book we will catch a glimpse of what Job actually did with his money, and with his time and energy: he rescued the needy; he cared personally for the handicapped and the dying; he brought orphans into his home; he even took the power barons of his day to court and argued the case for the underprivileged (see 29:12-17; 31:16-21)." (Mason)

e. **His sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day:** The idea of this description seems to be that Job's family had a happy and close relationship. This reinforces the idea that Job and his family were greatly blessed and does not seem to indicate that they were unduly given over to festivity and pleasure-seeking. They happily celebrated special days (**each on his appointed day**), probably their birthdays.

i. "No disapproval of this pleasant life is expressed. We need not suppose that they spent all their time in roistering and did no work. There is no hint of drunkenness or licence or laziness." (Andersen)

ii. "If he had condemned it he would never have offered sacrifice to God, *lest* they should have sinned, but he would have told them at once it was a sinful thing, and that he could give no countenance to it." (Spurgeon) Spurgeon saw in Job 1:4-5 a permission for feasting and celebration among believers; he preached a Christmas sermon upon this very text and used it as proof that God allows and enjoys such celebrations among His people.

f. Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings:

Again, the idea seems to be much more that Job was a scrupulously godly man who served as a priest to his family, more than that his children were wicked people who needed constant atonement.

i. "What a beautiful example is furnished by Job to Christian parents! When your girls are going among strangers, and your boys into the great ways of the world, and you are unable to impose your will upon them, as in the days of childhood, you can yet pray for them, casting over them the shield of intercession, with strong cryings and tears. They are beyond your reach; but by faith you can move the arm of God on their behalf." (Meyer)

ii. Bullinger on Job 1:5, **cursed God in their hearts**: "The word *chala*, to curse, stood originally in the primitive text; but out of a dislike to utter with the lips such an expression as "curse God," they put in its stead *barach*, to bless, relegating the original word *chala*, to curse, to the Massoretic notes; and placed on record the fact of their alteration, thus protecting the original primitive text."

iii. One would not know it from the first few verses, but the Book of Job is about an *epic war*. Yet no city is attacked or besieged or conquered; no battles are won or lost; no oceans are sailed, or nations founded, or adventures recorded. The whole conflict happens on an ash heap – virtually a garbage dump – outside a village. It is an epic war, but one of the inner life; a struggle to make sense of some of the deepest questions of life.

2. (6-12) The stage in heaven.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has *is* in your power; only do not lay a hand on his *person*." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

a. **Now there was a day:** This reveals the scene in heaven; unseen to Job and others on earth, but absolutely real nonetheless. The story of Job can really only be properly understood by taking into account what happened in heaven, and by having more than an earthly perspective.

i. "Without this prologue the Job of the dialogues and monologues might justly be considered a man with an insufferable self-righteousness, and the reader would be left without a heavenly perspective." (Smick)

b. **When the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD:** The phrase **sons of God** is used in the Old Testament to describe angelic

beings (Gen 6:1-4 and Job 38:7). Among this group of angelic beings, **Satan also came among them.**

i. The fact that **Satan... came among them** shows that Satan is himself an angelic being, and in no way equal to God. We often – to his great delight – inflate Satan’s status and importance, thinking of him as the *opposite* of God, as if God were light and Satan were darkness; as if God were hot and Satan were cold. Satan *wishes* he was the opposite of God, but God wants us to know that Satan is a mere creature and is in *no way* the opposite of God. If Satan has an opposite, it is not God the Father or God the Son; it would be a high-ranking angelic being such as Michael.

ii. The fact that they **came to present themselves before the LORD** shows that angelic beings – indeed, *fallen* angelic beings – have access to the presence of God (1Ki 22:21, Zec 3:1), but one day they will be restricted to the earth (Rev 12:9).

c. **From where do you come:** God allowed (and continues to allow) Satan and fallen angelic beings into His presence, but only for His own purposes. Therefore, He demanded to know what Satan’s business was.

d. **From going to and fro on the earth:** Though Satan has access to heaven, he also has free access to the earth, and roams about the earth as a roaring lion (1Pe 5:8). It can be said that Satan has an active interest in what happens on the earth.

e. **Have you considered My servant Job:** It was God who brought up Job as a subject for discussion, and God brought up Job in the sense of bragging about Job’s godliness and character. God was so impressed with Job that He affirmed the description of Job first recorded in Job 1:1.

i. Of course Satan *does* consider the saints of God; yet what does the devil see when he considers the saints?

- He sees them and is amazed at the difference between himself and God's people; he sees us and knows that though he has fallen, these earthen creatures stand.
- He sees them and is amazed at their happiness; he knows too well the misery of his own soul, but he admires and hates the peace in the soul of the believer.
- He sees them and looks for some fault, so that he may find some small comfort to his own black soul and hypocrisy.
- He sees them – especially great hearts among the saints – and sees those who block and hinder his foul work.
- He sees them and looks for opportunity to do them harm.

f. **There is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil:** This was *God's* pronouncement of Job's character. After these first two chapters of Job, almost everything we know of the man is colored by the perspective of the speaker. Later, when Job talks about himself and his situation, we must take into account that it is Job who speaks; when his friends speak likewise, they speak according to their own knowledge, ignorance, and bias. Only in the first two chapters do we have a truly objective viewpoint about Job. He *really* was a **blameless and upright man**, no matter what his friends would later say.

i. We know (and God knew) that Job was not sinlessly perfect; yet God called him **blameless**. "It means that no matter how horrible his offenses may have been, all the charges against him have been dropped. Absolutely no blame attaches to him, because the very one he offended has exonerated him." (Mason)

ii. We know that Job was not sinlessly perfect; yet God unashamedly seemed to see him that way. The modern believer stands in the same place, completely justified in Jesus Christ.

iii. "If at any point in the ensuing struggle we are tempted to question the integrity of Job's faith (as his friends do, relentlessly), it will not really be Job we are questioning, but the Lord." (Mason)

g. **Does Job fear God for nothing:** Here Satan fulfilled the role described in Rev 12:10 – the *accuser of the brethren*. Satan accused Job before God, insisting that Job's godliness was essentially false, and that Job only served God for what he could *get* from Him.

i. Satan's reply to God first reveals his essential *cynicism*; he doubts every supposed good as being dishonest and hollow. "Cynicism is the essence of the satanic. The Satan believes nothing to be genuinely good – neither Job in his disinterested piety nor God in His disinterested generosity." (Andersen)

ii. "If *thou* wilt be gracious, *he* will be pious. The exact maxim of a great statesman, Sir Robert Walpole: *Every man has his price*... No doubt Sir Robert met with many such and the Devil many more. But still God has multitudes that will neither sell their souls, their consciences, nor their country, for any price; who, though God should slay them, will nevertheless trust in him, and be honest men howsoever tempted by the Devil and his vicegerents. So did Job; so have

done thousands; so will all do, in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith.” (Clarke)

iii. The accusation against Job was also an accusation against God, for it implied that God had bribed Job into obedience. “‘I myself,’ he seems to say, ‘could be as pious as Job, were I as prosperous as he.’” (Bradley)

iv. Satan’s accusation gave testimony to the fact that God had protected Job (**Have You not made a hedge around him**) and had also blessed him (**You have blessed**). Jesus indicated that Satan wanted to do much worse against Peter than God allowed him to do (Luk 22:31-32) because of a similar **hedge** of protection.

v. **But now, stretch out Your hand:** “His language is abrupt; he commands God with imperative verbs: literally, ‘But now, you just extend your hand and damage all his property.’” (Andersen)

vi. Confident in his accusation against Job, Satan insisted to God that Job would **surely curse You to Your face** if this protection and blessing was withdrawn. Satan believed that adversity could make Job move from his *standing* in faith; that Job would be unable to stand against the wiles and the deceptions of the devil, as is given to the believer in Eph 6:13.

h. **Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person:** In response to Satan’s accusation, God gave him great – though limited – permission to attack Job. God would let down the **hedge** without completely removing it.

i. Satan had the power and the desire to afflict Job all along; what he lacked was the allowance from God.

When God allowed it, Satan was more than happy to attack Job up to the limit of the allowance.

ii. Though Satan was now able to attack Job in a much greater way than before, his power was not unlimited. God only allowed Satan to do what he wanted to do to ultimately serve His purpose.

iii. "But we must know, that God's end in this large grant was not to gratify the devil, but to glorify himself, by making Satan an instrument of his own shame and infamy." (Trapp)

i. Satan went out from the presence of the LORD:

As he did, he continued a sequence of events in the spiritual realm that (as in Eph 6:12) were real but not immediately apparent to Job as having their origin in a spiritual battle.

i. The revelation of the heavenly scene behind the earthly scene helps us to understand the later comment of James on Job: *Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful* (Jas 5:11). The two great themes of the Book of Job, as explained by James, are the *perseverance* of Job and the *end* intended by the Lord, and it is important that we learn *both* themes. The *end intended by the Lord* (Jas 5:11) connects with God's eternal purpose as revealed in Eph 3:10-11 – that God intends *that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose*. God used Job to teach angelic beings, especially to teach them about His own spectacular wisdom.

ii. Therefore, the Book of Job teaches us that there is an aspect of human misery that is not the penalty for sin, not correction in righteousness, not redemptive in itself, and not the noble bearing of persecution for righteousness' sake. Job's suffering was of this aspect; we might say that the *reason* for his suffering was as a tool to teach angelic beings. Job made known the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph 3:10-11).

iii. We might say that all the other reasons for suffering can also be used of God to reveal His wisdom to angelic beings. The man who suffers as the penalty of sin can, by the way he receives the suffering, be an important lesson of God's wisdom. Yet Job's case was unique; his suffering seems to be mainly or only concerned with this purpose of instructing angelic beings.

iv. In that process God used Satan himself, even as he **went out from the presence of the LORD** in all his evil design. "Satan may intend one thing, but God uses him for another. In all these things he is a minister – used for the ultimate blessing, comfort, and help of the people of God, and for their present spiritual profit... He was allowed to be the author of Job's trials and losses: but all his labour was wasted; for it ended in Job's receiving a double blessing for time, and for earth, and 'the righteousness of God' for ever and ever." (Bullinger)

v. "Others have held it is immoral by any human standards that there should be a game between the Almighty and Satan using as their pawn the soul of Job. Such a view overlooks the possibility we have already mentioned, that God does not meaninglessly

allow Job to be tormented. On the contrary, he is honoring Job by putting his full confidence in the genuineness of Job's faith, which Satan has questioned." (Smick)

vi. As good as Job was at the beginning of the book, he will be a *better man* at the end of it. He was better in character, more humble, and more blessed than before. "Foolish devil! He is piling up a pedestal on which God will set his servant Job, that he may be looked upon with wonder by all ages... Oh! how many saints have been comforted in their distress by this history of patience! How many have been saved out of the jaw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear by the dark experiences of the patriarch of Uz. O arch fiend, how art thou taken in thine own net! Thou hast thrown a stone which has fallen on thine own head. Thou madest a pit for Job, and hast fallen into it thyself; thou art taken in thine own craftiness." (Spurgeon)

B. Job's catastrophic loss and his reaction to it.

1. (13-19) Job's tragic and sudden losses.

Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, when the Sabeans raided *them* and took them away; indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided

the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

a. **Now there was a day:** Given greater allowance to afflict Job, Satan maximized his work against the man of God by bringing the catastrophe to Job in the span of a few hours. In that limited time Job lost his **oxen**, his **servants**, his **sheep**, his **camels**, and his **sons and daughters**.

i. This shows us that Satan was focused on *maximizing his advantage*. If he were allowed to attack Job, he would do it in the most effective way possible, all the way up to what God would allow. Therefore, *any foothold we give to Satan is dangerous*. We should expect that he will maximize *any* advantage given to him.

ii. **When his sons and daughters were eating and drinking** shows us the great *cruelty* of Satan. "Satan is here revealed in startling light. His malice is seen in the choice of time. He strikes in the midst of festivity." (Morgan)

iii. The catastrophe came upon Job's sons and daughters as they were feasting in **their oldest brother's house**. We know from Job 1:4-5 that Job would specifically sacrifice for his sons and daughters on these days; yet these prayers-in-action of Job on behalf of his children did not prevent the catastrophe.

This made the crisis all the more mysterious and problematic for Job.

b. The Sabeans... the fire of God fell from heaven... the Chaldeans... a great wind: The tragedies came to Job from many different causes; yet we know that the prior cause was the instigation of Satan.

i. In this we learn something of how Satan works. He did not *force* godly **Sabeans** and **Chaldeans** to do things against Job that they did not want to do. He accomplished his evil purpose by working through the evil character of fallen men.

ii. We also learn that in some way, Satan had some influence over the weather (**a great wind**) and could imitate a phenomenon usually associated with God (**the fire of God from heaven**). The servants of Job thought that *God* sent this fire, but that was only true in a very indirect sense, in the sense that God had allowed it by removing a prior restriction. This shows that at least at some times, Satan wants to work in such a way that what he does will be blamed on God.

iii. "We can only conclude that Satan swings great power over the weather. Not all power over all weather. But some power over some weather. To the extent that God allows, the Devil has supernatural power at his disposal to direct the elements to accomplish his evil purposes." (Lawson)

iv. We also see that this attack was clearly focused against Job; yet others suffered because Satan attacked Job and God allowed him to be attacked. Job's animals, servants, and children all perished because *Job* was the target. This can only be justified if we understand that:

- In allowing their lives to be ended, God did not allow these people to pass from an immortal state to a mortal state. Each of these unfortunates was *born* mortal and subject to death; the only surprise in their death was that they died *sooner* than expected, not that they died at all.
- The rightness or wrongness of what God either allows or actively does can only be finally judged by the measure of *eternity*, not the measure of this life. We can only say that God either did right or wrong by these unfortunates by the eternal picture. Until then we trust what Abraham knew of God: *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Gen 18:25).

2. (20-22) *Job reacts to his losses.*

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said:

**“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return there.**

**The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”**

In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

a. **Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head:**

Quite appropriately, Job mourned his tremendous losses. He had lost his sons and daughters and servants and a great amount of material wealth. It was a time for mourning.

i. Job mourned, but he did not mourn as the heathens or the pagans mourned. He did not cut or gash or tattoo himself for the dead as was the common practice among those ancient peoples (Lev 19:28).

b. **He fell to the ground and worshiped:** In the midst of his mourning, Job also decided to worship God despite

his circumstances and feelings. We might say that this was indeed pure worship and greatly glorifying to God.

i. "Surely it has not come to this among God's people, that he must do as we like, or else we will not praise him. If he does not please us every day, and give way to our whims, and gratify our tastes, then we will not praise him." (Spurgeon)

ii. "But how blank (think we) was the devil, when, hoping to hear Job blaspheme God, he heareth him blessing God's name in this sort." (Trapp)

iii. Later in the book, as spiritual battle is fought in and all around Job, he will seem to move very far from these words of worship. Yet it is important to remember that a man's *first* reaction is often very telling, and reveals what *really* dominates his heart. *Worship* was Job's first reaction to his crisis.

c. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away:

Job analyzed his situation in a godly and wise way. Job understood that:

- He came into this world with nothing, so everything he had was indeed a blessing from the bounty of God. If he now had less, it was still more than he came into this world with and more than he would take with him to the world beyond.

- His prior prosperity was not due to luck or mere human ingenuity; it was because of the great and powerful blessing of God upon his life. "I am so pleased to think that Job recognized *the hand of God everywhere giving*. He said, 'The Lord gave.' He did not say, 'I earned it all.' He did not say, 'There are all my hard-earned savings gone.'" (Spurgeon)

- God was in control of his life, and no matter what the immediate source of adversity or tragedy was, it had to

pass through the loving and wise hands of God before it could touch him.

- God was worthy to be blessed and praised in any and all circumstances of life.

i. "His words were of the profoundest philosophy. He recognized that man is more than the things he gathers about him." (Morgan)

ii. "Job sees only the hand of God in these events. It never occurs to him to curse the desert brigands, to curse the frontier guards, to curse his own stupid servants, now lying dead for their watchlessness. All secondary causes vanish. It was the Lord who gave; it was the Lord who removed; and in the Lord alone must the explanation of these strange happenings be sought." (Andersen)

iii. We can meditate on the implications of the words, **the LORD gave:**

- We should never think the good things of this world come to us from the earth; they come from heaven.
- They come to us as *gifts*; that is, they are undeserved.
- God gives His gifts with kindness and thoughtfulness.
- Knowing this sweetens the value of everything we have; things are more precious because they are gifts from a loving God.
- This prevents us from dishonesty; we want nothing in our hand except what God gives us, and do not want to mix what He gives with what the devil gives.
- It is foolishness to take pride in having more than what another has.

- It is easy to give back to God when we really understand that all we have comes from Him.
- We must always worship the Giver and not the gifts. The Giver is greater than the gifts He gives.

d. **Blessed be the name of the LORD:** This was the expression of worship mentioned in the previous verse. Job was able to bless the name of God even when he was specifically and severely tempted to *curse* the name of God.

i. "Remember the story of a man who was going to give a pound to some charitable institution. The devil said, 'No, you cannot afford it.' 'Then,' said the man, 'I will give two pounds; I will not be dictated to in this way.' Satan exclaimed, 'You are a fanatic.' The man replied, 'I will give four pounds.' 'Ah!' said Satan, 'what will your wife say when you go home, and tell her that you have given away four pounds?' 'Well,' said the man, 'I will give eight pounds now; and if you do not mind what you are at, you will tempt me to give sixteen.' So the devil was obliged to stop, because the more he tempted him, the more he went the other way. So let it be with us. If the devil would drive us to curse God, let us bless him all the more, and Satan will be wise enough to leave off tempting when he finds that, the more he attempts to drive us, the more we go in the opposite direction." (Spurgeon)

e. **In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong:** This demonstrates that Job *did not sin* or wrongly blame God when he said, "**the LORD has taken away.**" He was right to understand that God was ultimately behind all things, even if the immediate responsibility for an event was not God's.

i. We are impressed with Job's perspective on material things. He truly understood what Jesus said: *One's*

life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses (Luk 12:15). There are few in the world today who would endure the loss of such a fortune with such godliness and patient endurance.

ii. We are impressed with Job's unshaken commitment to God, and his enduring love for God. Satan's accusation – that if blessings were taken from Job, he would curse God – was proved to be a lie, and we might say that God was justifiably proud of His servant Job.

iii. In this first round of spiritual warfare, Satan was singularly unsuccessful in shaking Job from his standing in faith. Job successfully battled against spiritual attack and fulfilled the exhortation that would come many hundreds of years later from the Apostle Paul: *that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph 6:13).*

- Job made his stand against fear and did not give in to panic.
- Job made his stand against make-believe pretending and appropriately mourned.
- Job made his stand against pride and humbled himself before God.
- Job made his stand against self and decided to worship God.
- Job made his stand against a time-bound mindset and chose to think in terms of eternity.
- Job made his stand against unbelief and did not give in to vain questionings of God.
- Job made his stand against despair and saw the hand of God, even in catastrophe.

- Job made his stand against anger and did not blame God.

iv. This wonderful triumph of faith did not come from Job acting alone, but only as Job reacted to these disasters filled with and connected to God. We are not *told* that the Spirit of God filled Job to react this way and say these things, but we know it to be true. Satan was acting; but so was God in heaven. "He saith to himself, 'If Satan shall do much, I will do more; if he takes away much, I will give more; if he tempts the man to curse, I will fill him so full of love to me that he shall bless me. I will help him; I will strengthen him; yea, I will uphold him with the right hand of my righteousness.'" (Spurgeon)

v. Though we can say that God *strengthened* Job, there was no evident *comfort* from God; nor would there be for a long time. "Thirty-six chapters of agonizing soul-searching will elapse before the Lord so much as lifts a finger to begin comforting Job in these devastating losses." (Mason)

vi. "In this Satan was utterly disappointed; he found a man who loved his God more than his earthly portion... He had been so often successful in this kind of temptation, that he made no doubt that he should succeed again." (Clarke)

Satan Attacks Job's Health

Job 2:1 When the day came for the heavenly beings to appear before the LORD again, Satan was there among them.

Job 2:2 The LORD asked him, "Where have you been?" Satan answered, "I have been walking here and there, roaming around the earth."

Job 2:3 "Did you notice my servant Job?" the LORD asked. "There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil. You persuaded me to let you attack him for no reason at all, but Job is still as faithful as ever."

Job 2:4 Satan replied, "A person will give up everything in order to stay alive."

Job 2:5 But now suppose you hurt his body—he will curse you to your face!"

Job 2:6 So the LORD said to Satan, "All right, he is in your power, but you are not to kill him."

Job 2:7 Then Satan left the LORD's presence and made sores break out all over Job's body.

Job 2:8 Job went and sat by the garbage dump and took a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores.

Job 2:9 His wife said to him, "You are still as faithful as ever, aren't you? Why don't you curse God and die?"

Job 2:10 Job answered, "You are talking nonsense! When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when he sends us trouble?" Even in all this suffering Job said nothing against God.

Job's Three Friends

Job 2:11 Three of Job's friends were Eliphaz, from the city of Teman, Bildad, from the land of Shuah, and Zophar, from the land of Naamah. When they heard how much Job had been suffering, they decided to go and comfort him.

Job 2:12 While they were still a long way off they saw Job, but did not recognize him. When they did, they began to weep and wail, tearing their clothes in grief and throwing dust into the air and on their heads.

Job 2:13 Then they sat there on the ground with him for seven days and nights without saying a word, because they saw how much he was suffering.

Job 2:1-13

Job 2 – Job’s Health Is Destroyed

A. The second act of the heavenly scene.

1. (1-3) *God boasts again over His servant Job.*

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

a. **Again there was a day when the sons of God came:** This again indicates that Satan and certain angelic beings (fallen as well as faithful) have somewhat open access to God’s presence in heaven.

b. **And the LORD said to Satan:** The dialogue recorded here was completely unknown to Job; though perhaps, if he was the author of the book, at a later time God revealed this heavenly behind-the-scenes conversation to him.

i. **From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it:** “Surely as Job still retained his integrity, so did Satan his vanity; boasting that he came now from visiting his estate.”
(Trapp)

c. **And still he holds fast to his integrity:** Up to this point, this second recorded dialogue followed the same

pattern shown in Job 1:6-8. God used the repetition to impress upon Satan the futility of his first attack against Job.

i. **And still he holds fast to his integrity:** The idea "indicates a strengthening of the grip he already had." (Smick)

d. **Although you incited Me against him:** This shows that both God and Satan understood that the attack could only come to Job because God allowed it. Although God did not actively send the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, the fire, or the wind; they could only come by His permission.

e. **To destroy him without cause:** The idea is not that **cause** was absent in either God or Satan; they both had something they wanted to prove and establish in the whole account. However, there was no sinful **cause** in Job that prompted the calamities that befell him.

2. (4-6) Satan's reply.

So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life."

a. **Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life:** Satan here asserted that Job failed to curse God only because he was afraid that if he did, it would bring *personal* punishment from God. Satan argued that the problem with the prior attacks was that none of the previous attacks touched Job directly, but only things next to or outside of Job (his family and his possessions).

i. "In Job's ancient culture, 'skin for skin' was a bartering term meaning to trade one skin for another.

The Devil is accusing Job of being willing to risk the skin of his children and livestock in order to protect his own skin.” (Lawson)

ii. “Any skin for his own; cattle, servants, children may be easily parted with by him, to save himself in a whole skin, to keep himself whole.” (Trapp)

iii. When it came down to it, Abraham betrayed his wife to save his life. David forsook his sanity to save his life. Peter denied Jesus to save his own life. There is certainly some truth to the statement, **all that a man has he will give for his life.**

b. Touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face: Satan insisted that if the attack were made against Job *directly* – if some calamity came upon Job’s *body* – then Job would certainly **curse** God.

i. “Satan suggested to God a new test for Job. Physical suffering. Pain can weaken our resistance and make everything look and feel worse than it really is. More than one person has withstood tragedy only to fall apart under the onslaught of pain.” (Lawson)

ii. “It is the devil’s perpetual estimate of humanity that flesh is supreme.” (Morgan)

c. Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life: With this God again “lowered the hedge” that protected Job, but He did not eliminate it. Satan was given greater allowance to attack Job, but not unlimited allowance.

B. Job suffers affliction and shows integrity.

1. (7-8) Job is smitten with painful and disgusting sores.

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his

foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

a. **Struck Job with painful boils:** This disease that came upon Job was specifically meant to drive Job to such great despair that he would curse God. We are not surprised that the attack against Job was severe (**painful boils**) and massive (**from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head**).

i. We again are challenged to see that Satan has the power to attack mankind in ways we perhaps previously did not perceive. Previously, we saw that Satan could inspire others to attack Job (Job 1:14; Job 1:17) and could direct natural calamity as an attack against Job (Job 1:16; Job 1:18-19). Now, we see that disease and physical suffering could come against Job as an attack from Satan. Another example of this is in Luk 13:17, where Jesus revealed that a woman who had been afflicted for 18 years was actually afflicted with a *spirit of infirmity* and was bound by Satan in her condition.

ii. The exact nature of Job's ailment has been debated. "Some kind of acute dermatitis spreading everywhere and developing infections with darkened (Job 30:28) and peeling (30:30) skin and constantly erupting pustules (7:5b) would manifest the pruritus and purulence highlighted in 2:7." (Andersen)

iii. One of the curses God promised to a disobedient Israel was, *The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed* (Deu 28:27). This may very well be the same affliction that Job suffered from; it reminds us also that Job had every reason to

feel cursed by God, and he appeared that way to others also.

iv. Whatever the exact diagnosis of Job's condition, taken together, his medical problems were significant. Other passages in the Book of Job tell us more of what Job suffered.

- Intense pain (*My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest; Job 30:17*).
- Peeling and darkened skin (*My skin grows black and falls from me; Job 30:30 a*).
- Pus-filled, erupting sores (*My flesh is caked with worms and dust, my skin is cracked and breaks out afresh; Job 7:5 b*).
- Anorexia, emaciation (*My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh; Job 19:20*).
- Fever (*My bones burn with fever; Job 30:30 b*).
- Depression (*I loathe my life; I would not live forever; Job 7:16 and My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; days of affliction confront me. I go about mourning, but not in the sun; Job 30:27-28*).
- Weeping (*My face is flushed with weeping; Job 16:16 a*).
- Sleeplessness (*When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise, and the night be ended?' Job 7:4*).
- Nightmares (*Then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions; Job 7:14*).
- Putrid breath (*My breath is offensive to my wife; Job 19:17*).
- Difficulty breathing (*He will not allow me to catch my breath; Job 9:18*).

- Failing vision (*On my eyelids is the shadow of death; Job 16:16 b*).
- Rotting teeth (*I have escaped by the skin of my teeth; Job 19:20*).
- Haggard looks (*When they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him; Job 2:12*).
- Painful, swollen sores all over his body (*painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; Job 2:7*).
- Intense itching (*to scrape himself; Job 2:8*).
- This condition lasted for months (*Oh, that I were as in months past; Job 29:2 and I have been allotted months of futility; Job 7:3*).

b. He took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself: Job dealt with his painful affliction to the best of his ability and then sat in a mournful place. **In the midst of the ashes** probably means “in the city dump,” where garbage was burned; Job sat on a burned heap.

- i. “*He took him a potsherd; partly to allay the itch which his ulcers caused; and partly to squeeze out or take away that purulent matter which was under them, or flowed from them, and was the great cause of his torment.*” (Poole)
- ii. “*Though somewhat messy, ‘the ashes’ were perhaps the most sterile place a man with sores could sit. That aspect may be only coincidental; but the ancient, by practice, may have found it physically advantageous.*” (Smick)

2. (9-10) *Job holds his integrity before his wife.*

Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” But he said to her,

"You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

a. **Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die:** Job's wife has become a proverbial example of a cruel, unsupportive, sharp-tongued wife. Yet some allowance must be made, considering *her* losses in the previous few days. She also lost *her* children and *her* wealth and should not be too harshly judged.

i. The Septuagint puts more words into the mouth of Job's wife: *How long wilt thou hold out, and say, "Behold I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance?" For, behold, thy memorial is cut off from the earth – [even thy] sons and thy daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb, which I bore in vain, with sorrows; and though thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer, and a servant from place to place, and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pains, which now beset me. Now curse God and die.* (Cited in Bullinger)

ii. "She can't bear to see her husband suffer like this. Her heart, already crushed by the loss of her ten children, is now without hope. She is saying, 'Curse God and He'll strike you dead too. Then you can escape this pain. Death would be better than this.'" (Lawson)

iii. "*Renounce*, she says, *God and die*. Leave the unprofitable service of this God, Who has left thee to so undeserved a fate. Leave Him, and quit life, a life that has nothing left worth living for." (Bradley)

iv. Nevertheless, the implication of her words, “**do you still hold fast to your integrity?**” is that *she* had abandoned her integrity. Satan’s goal in his attacks against Job was to shake Job from his standing; he failed in regard to Job, but he succeeded in regard to Job’s wife. Job must have been severely grieved, both at his wife’s foolish words and her own shaken faith. “His cup seemed full. One other turn of the rack, so to speak, is yet possible. It is not spared him. From the one human quarter from which comfort might have yet come, there comes only a vulgar taunt, and suggestion of despair.” (Bradley)

v. “Not knowing the limitation God had put on the Accuser, Job’s wife at this point diagnosed the disease as incurable and recommended that he curse God and die.” (Smick)

b. You speak as one of the foolish women speaks:

This was a wisely-worded rebuke to Job’s wife. He did not accuse her of being a **foolish** woman, but of speaking **like one of the foolish women**. He indicated that this was out of character for her.

i. “He does not call her ‘wicked’, merely foolish, that is, lacking in discernment. She thinks God has treated Job badly, and deserves a curse; Job finds nothing wrong with what has happened to him.” (Andersen)

ii. Mason comments on Satan’s strategy here: “He sows strife and succeeds in turning the couple against each other. She ridicules his religion, and he calls her a fool. A degree of alienation sets in which, just in itself, would very likely have been the worst trial these two had ever passed through in their married life.”

c. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity: Job again shows his wisdom

in this reply. He recognized that God does not owe us good; He *gives* it as a gift that we should **accept**. Accordingly, if adversity comes to us, and we are wise to see that even in adversity, there may be a “gift” that we should **accept**.

i. “Shall we poor worms give laws to our supreme Lord and Governor, and oblige him always to bless and favour us, and never to afflict us? And shall not those great, and manifold, and long-continued mercies, which from time to time God hath freely and graciously given us, compensate for these short afflictions?” (Poole)

d. **In all this Job did not sin with his lips**: This is another remarkable statement to the credit of Job. He did not sin in his response to either his God or his wife.

i. **In all this** is a broad statement, meaning that up to this point, Job had not sinned at all in what he said. This is important to note, because some say that these calamities came upon Job because of a *negative confession* he made, supposedly recorded in Job 1:5 and in Job 3:25. This statement makes it clear that **Job did not sin with his lips**, certainly not in the sense of a negative confession.

3. (11-13) The consolation of Job’s friends.

Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days

and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

a. When Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place: This passage introduces three remarkable friends of Job. Their names were **Eliphaz, Bildad,** and **Zophar**. These men came to Job in his hour of need.

i. For they had made an appointment: "The fact that they met by *appointment* shows that they were already acquaintances who felt it would be better to come *together*." (Andersen)

b. To come and mourn with him, and to comfort him: Their intended goal was good and noble. They came to be with him (**to come**), to share his sorrow (**and mourn with him**), and to bring some relief to Job (**and to comfort him**).

c. And did not recognize him: The boils left Job with a horrific, disfigured appearance. Upon seeing Job, his three friends were instantly gripped with grief and mourning as if one had died.

i. "As they drew near and raised their eyes and saw the change which disease and misery had worked in his form and face, the horrors of the spectacle overcame them." (Bradley)

d. They sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him: This was a wonderful display of comfort and common cause with Job. They shared in his afflicted state, acting as if they were similarly afflicted. They offered no statement except for their compassionate presence.

i. “*Seven days and seven nights* was the usual time of mourning for the dead, Gen 50:10; 1Sa 31:13, and therefore proper both for Job’s children, who were dead, and for Job himself, who was in a manner dead whilst he lived.” (Poole)

ii. After this point in the Book of Job, there begins 35 chapters of discussion between Job and his friends. Yet all that discussion must be put in the context of the genuine love and concern that these friends had for Job, and there was a sense in which they *earned* their right to speak by their sacrificial display of compassion.

iii. “While it is true that Job suffered more at the hands of these friends ultimately than by the attacks of the foe, yet some recognition must be made of the goodness of the men.” (Morgan)

- They are to be admired because they came to Job.
- They are to be admired because they wept for and with Job.
- They are to be admired because they sat in silence with Job for seven days.
- They are to be admired because they intended all the best for Job and were persistent in wanting and doing what they thought was best for Job.
- They are to be admired because they spoke their opinion about Job and his condition to Job himself, instead of speaking *about* him to others.

iv. “They believed him to be suffering for heavy crimes; and seeing him suffer so much, they were not willing to add to his distress by invectives or reproach. Job himself first broke silence.” (Clarke)

v. "We leave Job and his friends seated in silence. There is calm around them, but we feel that the air is heavy, and that there is a tempest in the sky. We shall hear the storm burst and the thunder roll when next we meet." (Bradley)

Job Laments His Birth

Job 3:1 Finally Job broke the silence and cursed the day on which he had been born.

Job 3:2 (2-3) O God, put a curse on the day I was born; put a curse on the night when I was conceived!

Job 3:4 Turn that day into darkness, God. Never again remember that day; never again let light shine on it.

Job 3:5 Make it a day of gloom and thick darkness; cover it with clouds, and blot out the sun.

Job 3:6 Blot that night out of the year, and never let it be counted again;

Job 3:7 make it a barren, joyless night.

Job 3:8 Tell the sorcerers to curse that day, those who know how to control Leviathan.

Job 3:9 Keep the morning star from shining; give that night no hope of dawn.

Job 3:10 Curse that night for letting me be born, for exposing me to trouble and grief.

Job 3:11 I wish I had died in my mother's womb or died the moment I was born.

Job 3:12 Why did my mother hold me on her knees? Why did she feed me at her breast?

Job 3:13 If I had died then, I would be at rest now,

Job 3:14 sleeping like the kings and rulers who rebuilt ancient palaces.

Job 3:15 Then I would be sleeping like princes who filled their houses with gold and silver,

Job 3:16 or sleeping like a stillborn child.

Job 3:17 In the grave wicked people stop their evil, and tired workers find rest at last.

Job 3:18 Even prisoners enjoy peace, free from shouts and harsh commands.

Job 3:19 Everyone is there, the famous and the unknown, and slaves at last are free.

Job 3:20 Why let people go on living in misery? Why give light to those in grief ?

Job 3:21 They wait for death, but it never comes; they prefer a grave to any treasure.

Job 3:22 They are not happy till they are dead and buried;

Job 3:23 God keeps their future hidden and hems them in on every side.

Job 3:24 Instead of eating, I mourn, and I can never stop groaning.

Job 3:25 Everything I fear and dread comes true.

Job 3:26 I have no peace, no rest, and my troubles never end.

Job 3:1-26

Job 3 – Job Curses the Day of His Birth

A. Wishes he had never been born.

1. (1-2) Job will curse his birth day, but not his God.

After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. And Job spoke, and said:

a. **After this:** This was after all the catastrophe, all the personal affliction, and all the demonstration of compassion from Job's friends. Now, Job will begin to speak about his situation.

b. **Cursed the day of his birth:** Satan was confident that he could push Job to curse God (Job 1:11;

Job 2:5). As Job spoke in his deep distress, he **cursed the day of his birth** – but he did not even come close to cursing God.

i. Job's thinking was somewhat common among the ancients. The historian Herodotus described an ancient people who mourned new births (for the suffering that the new life would endure) and rejoiced in deaths (as a final release from the suffering of life).

ii. This chapter begins the battle in Job's mind and soul. He will not lose more or suffer more than he already has (though his physical pain will continue). Yet now we can say that the battle enters into an entirely other arena; the arena of Job's mind and soul. How will he choose to think about his suffering? How will he choose to think about what *others* think about his suffering? How will he choose to think about God in all this? These are the questions that take up the remainder of the book, and soon come to any sufferer. The catastrophic loss itself is only an entry point into the agonizing battle in the mind and soul.

iii. "One of the grimmest aspects of this story is that Job never does teeter over the brink into madness, but rather faces his entire ordeal with eyes wide-open." (Mason)

2. (3-10) Job curses the day of his birth.

**"May the day perish on which I was born,
And the night *in which* it was said,
'A male child is conceived.'
May that day be darkness;
May God above not seek it,
Nor the light shine upon it.
May darkness and the shadow of death claim it;
May a cloud settle on it;
May the blackness of the day terrify it.**

**As for that night, may darkness seize it;
May it not rejoice among the days of the year,
May it not come into the number of the months.
Oh, may that night be barren!
May no joyful shout come into it!
May those curse it who curse the day,
Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan.
May the stars of its morning be dark;
May it look for light, but *have* none,
And not see the dawning of the day;
Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother's*
womb,
Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.**

a. **May the day perish on which I was born:** Here, in fine Hebrew poetic style, Job cursed the day of his birth. Yet if that were not enough, he goes even further back and curses the night of his conception. Job's complaint is that it would be better if he were never born than to endure his present catastrophe of affliction.

i. This begins a section that is somewhat like a dialogue between Job and his friends. Sometimes a speaker in this dialogue answers what the previous speaker said; sometimes they do not. Sometimes the speeches are emotional much more than logical. When Job speaks, he often speaks *to* God; his friends speak much *about* God but never *to* Him.

ii. Beginning with Job 3:3, the style of speaking (and writing) is poetic. This means that we must allow for figures of speech and exaggeration of feeling in those who speak. "So when Job calls God his enemy, the reader must remember these are words of poetic passion used analogically as the total context proves." (Smick)

b. **May that day be darkness:** Job here is despising the day of his birth and wishing that this day could be wiped off the calendar of history. Job does not curse God here or anywhere else in the Book of Job; but here he makes his strongest statements against God and especially against the wisdom and plan of God.

i. "As God had said in Gen 1:3, 'Let there be light,' so Job, using the same terminology in Job 3:4, said, 'As for that day, let there be darkness' (literal translation). All this is a logical absurdity, but it is poetry, and Job meant to give full vent to his feelings." (Smick)

ii. We can say that he cursed *his day*, but not *his God*, as the devil wanted him to do. "Giving the reins wholly to his grief, he roareth and rageth beyond all reason; and had not the Spirit held him back, he would surely have run headlong into blasphemy and desperation, which was Satan's design." (Trapp)

c. **May those curse it who curse the day:** Without endorsing the practices of ancient sorcerers, Job calls upon them (**those who curse**) to also pronounce this curse upon the day he was born.

i. "Job summons the ancient soothsayers to curse his birthday. I don't believe Job personally believed in their mystical power, nor was he committing himself to them. Rather, he is simply communicating vividly." (Lawson)

d. **Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan:** This is the first mention of this strange creature in the Bible, but **Leviathan** is mentioned prominently in a long discourse beginning at Job 41:1. Usually **Leviathan** is considered to be a mythical sea-monster or dragon that terrorized sailors and fishermen.

i. In Job's present context, the idea may be that even as sailors and fishermen would curse the threatening Leviathan with all their might, so Job wishes the day of his birth would also be cursed. "Not as if Job did justify this practice, but only it is a rash and passionate wish, that they who pour forth so many curses undeservedly, would bestow their deserved curse upon this day." (Poole)

ii. "Current mythology used the term Leviathan for a monster of chaos who lived in the sea, and the Sea itself was a boisterous deity who could be aroused professionally. But to Job, a strict monotheist, this was simply vivid imagery." (Smick)

iii. "There can be no doubt that the *Leviathan* is the chaos dragon of the ancient myths." (Andersen)

iv. The name **Leviathan** means "*twisting one*" and is also used in other interesting places in Scripture.

- Psa 74:12-14 refers to Leviathan as a sea serpent, and that God broke the head of the Leviathan long ago, perhaps at the creation.

- Psa 104:26 also refers to Leviathan as a sea creature.

- Isa 27:1 speaks of the *future* defeat of Leviathan, also associating it with a *twisted serpent* that lives *in the sea*.

- Isa 51:9 and Psalm 89:8-10 also speak of a serpent associated with the sea that God defeated as a demonstration of His great strength, and identifies this serpent with the name *Rahab*, meaning *proud one*.

- Job 26:12-13 also refers to God's piercing defeat of a fleeing serpent associated with the sea.

v. Ancient rabbinic mythologies suggest that an evil serpent was in the primeval sea resisting creation, and that God killed the serpent and brought order to the world (Gen 1:1-2).

vi. Satan is often represented as a dragon or a serpent (Genesis 3; Revelation 12, 13), and the sea is thought of as a dangerous or threatening place in the Jewish mind (Isa 57:20; Mar 4:39; Rev 21:1). Therefore, Leviathan may be another serpent-like manifestation of Satan, who was the original “Rahab” (*proud one*).

vii. The Puritan commentator John Trapp avoided the discussion of Leviathan altogether. “If I should go about to show the reader, with the several opinions of interpreters, I should not only tire him out, but also danger doing as that vicar of Augsburgh did... at the end of his last lecture said, that both Job and himself were very glad to be rid of one another; for as he understood little or nothing of Job’s meaning, so Job seemed to him to be more tormented with his enarrations [exposition] than ever he had been with all his own ulcers.”

B. Job longs for the grave as a release from his present misery.

1. (11-19) Why did I not die at birth?

“Why did I not die at birth?

Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?

Why did the knees receive me?

Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?

For now I would have lain still and been quiet,

I would have been asleep;

Then I would have been at rest

With kings and counselors of the earth,

Who built ruins for themselves,

Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses *with* silver;
Or *why* was I not hidden like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light?
There the wicked cease *from* troubling,
And there the weary are at rest.
There the prisoners rest together;
They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.
The small and great are there,
And the servant *is* free from his master.

a. **Why did I not perish when I came from the womb:** Job continued his complaint from his place of misery. Using poetic exaggeration, Job powerfully communicated his present pain and the feeling that it would be much better if he had never survived to face such catastrophe.

i. It is as if Job said at this point, "I have asked that the day of my birth be obliterated, and that has not and cannot happen. So why could I have not been a stillbirth?"

ii. It is easy – but very, very wrong – to think that Job was a sinner because he was so emotional. But the Bible does not present to us a stoic, unfeeling, "stiff-upper-lip" approach to the problems of life. "It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the startling sentiments expressed in this speech do not mean that Job has cracked under the strain. There is no hint that Satan has finally made his point... The Lord's testing is not to find out if Job can sit unmoved like a piece of wood." (Andersen)

b. **For now I would have lain still and been quiet, I would have been asleep:** Job was wrong in his understanding of the afterlife, perhaps believing in something similar to the modern doctrine of *soul sleep*,

which says that the dead lie in the grave in some sort of suspended state until they are resurrected on the final day.

i. The idea of *soul sleep* is wrong because of what Paul clearly wrote in 2Co 5:6-8 – that *to be absent from the body* is to *be present with the Lord*. Paul understood that if he was not alive on this earth, he would be in the presence of God and *not* in a suspended state lying in a grave. Paul also understood that if he died, it would be an immediate

gain (Php 1:21), which also argues against the idea of soul sleep.

ii. We can explain Job's lack of knowledge of the afterlife by understanding the principle of 2Ti 2:10 : that Jesus Christ *brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*. The understanding of immortality was at best cloudy in the Old Testament but is much clearer in the New Testament. For example, we can say that Jesus knew fully what He was talking about when He described hell and judgment (such as in Mat 25:41-46). We therefore rely on the *New Testament* for our understanding of the afterlife, much more than the *Old*.

iii. We also understand that this does not in any way take away from the truth of the Bible and the Book of Job. What is true is that Job actually said this and actually believed it; the truth of the statement itself must be evaluated according to the rest of the Bible.

iv. Later, God challenged and corrected Job's presumptuous assertions regarding the afterlife, reminding Job that he did not in fact know what life after death was like (Job 38:2; Job 38:17).

c. **There the wicked cease from troubling:** Job was also wrong in this view of the afterlife. He had the feeling that many people have – that the world beyond this is somehow a better place for *everyone*. In fact, **the wicked** do not **cease from troubling** in the world beyond; their trouble only increases. The **prisoners** do not **rest**, and perhaps the *only voice* they hear is that of their **oppressor**.

i. "It implies that *the wicked* live in a state of emotional disturbance which happily ends for them in death. We are already near the bitter thought that being good or bad makes no difference in the end." (Andersen)

ii. This deception is remarkably widespread. One notable example involves the infamous Columbine murderers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who left behind a videotaped document spelling out their motivation. In the last segment of tape, shot the morning of the murders, Harris and Klebold are dressed and say they are ready for "our little Judgment Day." Then Klebold, looking tense, says goodbye to his parents. He concluded, "I didn't like life too much. Just know I am going to a better place than here." Incredibly, these young men believed they were going to a *better place*.

iii. Yet we understand that Job was not aiming for theological certainty or to explain the afterlife. He poured out the agony of his soul. "Job meddles not here with their eternal state after death, or the sentence and judgment of God against wicked men, of which he speaks hereafter; but only speaks of their freedom from worldly troubles, which is the only matter of his complaint and present discourse." (Poole)

2. (20-26) Job laments his state: why go on living?

**“Why is light given to him who is in misery,
And life to the bitter of soul,
Who long for death, but it does not come,
And search for it more than hidden treasures;
Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad when they can find the grave?
Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
And whom God has hedged in?
For my sighing comes before I eat,
And my groanings pour out like water.
For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me,
And what I dreaded has happened to me.
I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest, for trouble comes.”**

a. **Why is light given to him who is in misery:** Job wondered why God allowed those in misery such as his to go on living, and why **life** was given to those who were so **bitter of soul**. It is a moving, poetic expansion of the idea expressed in the previous passage, speculating that death was better than his present misery.

i. Job was among those **who long for death, but it does not come**. Yet he did not commit or seem to seriously consider suicide. Again, this was the outpouring of an honest, agonizing soul.

ii. “But it is observable that Job durst not lay violent hands upon himself, nor do any thing to hasten or procure his death; notwithstanding all his miseries and complaints, he was contented to *wait all the days of his appointed time, till his change came, Job 14:14.*” (Poole)

b. **Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in:** Job’s trouble

did not come because he had lost faith in God. He felt and feared that God had lost faith in him. He asks, "Why continue living (**why is light given**) if I can't see the way and God has trapped me in this place?"

i. "His concern from beginning to end is God; not his wealth or his health, but his life with God. It is because he seems to have lost God that he is in such torment." (Andersen)

ii. "Never does he whine and wail that the Lord has taken away his children, his servants, his camels, and his building... What Job does begrudge, however, is that he feels to be the loss of his *spiritual* estate... what he is really bemoaning is the loss of his peace with God – the loss of unbroken fellowship with his Creator, the loss of any felt sense of the Lord's friendship and approval." (Mason)

iii. "As Satan invaded Job's life and brought great harm, God had built *another* hedge around Job's life. But this hedge is to keep Job from escaping his trials. He is now locked in. Instead of a wall of protection to keep Satan out, now there is a wall of affliction that keeps Job in." (Lawson)

iv. "The words are even more bitter, for there is an ironical echo of what the Satan had said in 1:10. The Satan saw God's *hedge* as a protection; Job finds it a restriction. He feels trapped." (Andersen)

v. The man here described can see no reason for the trouble he is in; his **way is hidden**. Yet there was actually a wonderful answer to Job's question, if he could only see it with the eye of faith.

- God allowed Job to continue on in life to teach a lesson to angelic beings.

- God allowed Job to continue on in life to teach him special reliance upon God.
- God allowed Job to continue on in life to teach him to not regard the wisdom of man so much.
- God allowed Job to continue on in life to vindicate him before other men.
- God allowed Job to continue on in life to make him a lesson and an example for all ages.
- God allowed Job to continue on in life to give him more than he ever had before.

c. **For my sighing comes before I eat, and my groanings pour out like water:** We sense the great *emotion* in Job's speech. He was not a stoic or concerned with keeping what is known as a "stiff upper lip" in the midst of all his calamity. Such an emotionless Christian life is never presented to us a Biblical ideal.

d. **For the thing that I greatly feared has come upon me:** Job reminds us that before this disaster came to his life, he did not live a happy-go-lucky care-free life. He was concerned that trouble might come to him or to his family, so he took precautions before God to prevent it (Job 1:5).

i. "Whereas it might be said unto him, Is it fit for thee, who hast hitherto been so happy, now to take on so heavily, because thus and thus afflicted? Truly, saith he, I was never so happy as you took me for; because (considering how movable and mutable all outward things are) I always feared lest I should outlive my prosperity; that which now also is unhappily befallen me." (Trapp)

ii. "While I was in prosperity I thought adversity might come, and I had a dread of it. I feared the loss of my family and my property; and both have occurred. I

was not lifted up: I knew that what I possessed I had from divine Providence, and that he who gave might take away. I am not stripped of my all as a punishment for my self-confidence." (Clarke)

e. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes: With these final four blows of the hammer, Job ends his first speech. Through it all, he shows us that even a great man of faith can fall into great depression and despair.

i. The great preacher of Victorian England, Charles Spurgeon, describe just such a season in his own life: "I was lying upon my couch during this last week, and my spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for – but a very slight thing will move me to tears just now – and a kind friend was telling me of some poor old soul living near, who was suffering very great pain, and yet she was full of joy and rejoicing. I was so distressed by the hearing of that story, and felt so ashamed of myself, that I did not know what to do; wondering why I should be in such a state as this; while this poor woman, who had a terrible cancer, and was in the most frightful agony, could nevertheless 'rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'" (Charles Spurgeon, *The Christian's Heaviness and Rejoicing*)

ii. "Where in the world will you find a sadder strain of more hopeless, uncontrolled, and unbroken lamentation and mourning?" (Bradley) Yet "Such outpouring is a far more healthy thing for the soul than dark and silent brooding." (Morgan)

Eliphaz Speaks: The Innocent Prosper

Job 4:1 (1-2) Job, will you be annoyed if I speak? I can't keep quiet any longer.

Job 4:3 You have taught many people and given strength to feeble hands.

Job 4:4 When someone stumbled, weak and tired, your words encouraged him to stand.

Job 4:5 Now it's your turn to be in trouble, and you are too stunned to face it.

Job 4:6 You worshiped God, and your life was blameless; and so you should have confidence and hope.

Job 4:7 Think back now. Name a single case where someone righteous met with disaster.

Job 4:8 I have seen people plow fields of evil and plant wickedness like seed; now they harvest wickedness and evil.

Job 4:9 Like a storm, God destroys them in his anger.

Job 4:10 The wicked roar and growl like lions, but God silences them and breaks their teeth.

Job 4:11 Like lions with nothing to kill and eat, they die, and all their children are scattered.

Job 4:12 Once a message came quietly, so quietly I could hardly hear it.

Job 4:13 Like a nightmare it disturbed my sleep.

Job 4:14 I trembled and shuddered; my whole body shook with fear.

Job 4:15 A light breeze touched my face, and my skin crawled with fright.

Job 4:16 I could see something standing there; I stared, but couldn't tell what it was. Then I heard a voice out of the silence:

Job 4:17 "Can anyone be righteous in the sight of God or be pure before his Creator?

Job 4:18 God does not trust his heavenly servants; he finds fault even with his angels.

Job 4:19 Do you think he will trust a creature of clay, a thing of dust that can be crushed like a moth?

Job 4:20 We may be alive in the morning, but die unnoticed before evening comes.

Job 4:21 All that we have is taken away; we die, still lacking wisdom."

Job 4:1-21

Job 4 – The First Speech of Eliphaz

This begins a long section in the Book of Job where Job's friends counsel him and he answers them. His friends speak in more or less three rounds, with each speech followed by a reply from Job. At the end of these speeches, God answers Job and his friends and settles the matter.

A. The opening comments of Eliphaz.

1. (1-6) Eliphaz calls upon Job to remember the advice he has given to others as a helper of the weak.

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

"If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary?

But who can withhold himself from speaking?

Surely you have instructed many,

And you have strengthened weak hands.

Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,

And you have strengthened the feeble knees;

But now it comes upon you, and you are weary;

It touches you, and you are troubled.

Is not your reverence your confidence?

And the integrity of your ways your hope?"

a. **Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:** Eliphaz was from Teman, an Edomite city that was known as a center of wisdom (Jer 49:7).

b. If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary: With this tactful beginning, Eliphaz began his speech. We may say that he had earned the right to speak to Job, because in a remarkable display of friendship, he sat wordless with Job through a whole week to show his sympathy and brotherhood with the afflicted man (Job 2:11-13).

c. But who can withhold himself from speaking: Eliphaz felt *compelled* to speak; his love and concern for Job strongly motivated him to help his suffering friend. Nevertheless, it will be later found that the advice of Eliphaz and the rest of Job's counselors was wrong (Job 42:7-8).

d. Surely you have instructed many... now it comes upon you, and you are weary: Eliphaz began to confront Job with what he saw as his problem. This took a great deal of courage on the part of Eliphaz; he was the first one to speak, and he spoke to a man with an enviable reputation for godliness and one suffering from terrible calamity.

i. Yet he pointed at this apparent contradiction in Job's lament recorded in the previous chapter: That this man who had taught and comforted many in their time of need now seems to despair in his *own* time of need.

ii. "Already there is insinuation that Job is unable to apply to himself what he preached to others." (Andersen)

iii. "This is galling. But hitherto Eliphaz had commended Job; now he dasheth all, and draweth a black line over that he had spoken once. To commend a man with a but is a wound instead of a commendation... it sprinkleth black upon white, and

so smutteth a man's good name, which is slander in a high degree." (Trapp)

e. **Is not your reverence your confidence:** This has the idea of, "Job, does not your despair show that you have lost **confidence** in your **reverence** and lost **hope** in **the integrity of your ways**?"

i. "Men are best known by affliction, and this now showeth of what metal thou art made; for now thou doth cast off thy fear of God, and all thy confidence and hope in him." (Trapp)

ii. This begins a section where Eliphaz (and others) will try to make Job see that his problems have come upon him because of some sin on his part, and that he should confess and repent of his sin in order to be restored.

iii. Eliphaz began on the basis of Job's complaint as recorded in Job 3. He reasoned that Job would not complain in this way unless he was in some way guilty; that his guilty conscience was the root of his suffering. As it turned out, *this was a false assumption*. Job's complaint was simply the cry of a life in pain and not because Job consciously or unconsciously understood that he *deserved* this calamity because of his sin.

2. (7-11) *Eliphaz explains what he believed to be the source of Job's troubles.*

**"Remember now, who ever perished being innocent?
Or where were the upright ever cut off?
Even as I have seen,
Those who plow iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same.
By the blast of God they perish,
And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.**

**The roaring of the lion,
The voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions are broken.
The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
And the cubs of the lioness are scattered.”**

a. **Who ever perished being innocent:** Here Eliphaz came to the heart of his argument. He boldly said that Job was guilty of some sin because the **innocent** do not suffer as he had, and the **upright** are not **cut off** as he was.

i. In this context, **cut off** means to be forsaken by God and goodness. Later in Israel, it would often mean to be executed.

b. **Those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same:** Eliphaz spoke convincingly from his own experience (**Even as I have seen**). Job was reaping **trouble**, so he must have plowed sin (**iniquity**) and sown the seeds of **trouble**.

i. The counsel of Eliphaz is full of common sense and rooted in his own observations and experience. We might even say that it is mostly true and can be commonly seen as true. Nevertheless, we also know that in Job's case *he was wrong, and this was the wrong counsel* (remembering God's assessment of Eliphaz and Job's counselors in Job 42:7).

ii. Many people today believe the counsel of Eliphaz and believe it as an absolute spiritual law instead of a general principle. Some take the passage from Gal 6:7 : *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*. Yet it is important to understand the *context* of Paul's statement, which was encouragement and exhortation for Christians to give materially for the support of their ministers. It is true that the principle

of Gal 6:7 has application beyond giving and supporting teachers and ministers. It has a general application in life; what we get out is often what we put in. Yet Paul did not promote some law of spiritual karma that ensures we will get good when we do good things or always get bad when we do bad things. If there were such an absolute spiritual law, it would surely damn us all. Instead, Paul simply related the principle of sowing and reaping to the way we manage our resources before the Lord. He used the same picture in 1Co 9:11 and 2Co 9:6-10.

iii. Job and his friends have built their whole life on the belief that God helps the good and hinders the bad; that in fact God can be seen as morally good in the affairs of men. "The friends must infer from Job's suffering that he has sinned; Job must infer from his innocence that God is unjust." (Andersen)

c. **By the blast of God they perish:** Eliphaz here clearly implied that Job's suffering came as the judgment of God against him; that the **breath of His anger** burned against Job.

i. The idea is also that the mere **breath of His anger** is enough to destroy God's foes. "He puts himself to no great pain to punish them; but blows them away as so many dust-heaps." (Trapp)

d. **The teeth of the young lions are broken:** Eliphaz painted the picture of how strong the anger of God is, that it is strong enough to humble and defeat even strong **young lions**. The idea is that the anger of God has also brought Job low.

B. A revelation regarding the frailty of man.

1. (12-16) *A spirit comes to Eliphaz by night.*

**"Now a word was secretly brought to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it.
In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,
Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones shake.
Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair on my body stood up.
It stood still,
But I could not discern its appearance.
A form was before my eyes;
There was silence;
Then I heard a voice saying:**

a. **A word was secretly brought to me:** Eliphaz claimed that he received this word in a dream, **when deep sleep falls on men**, and he received it by a **spirit** that **passed before** his **face** in his dream.

i. "Eliphaz bolstered the authority of his words by an appeal to the supernatural – an eerie and hair-raising experience in which he received a divine oracle." (Smick)

b. **A spirit passed before my face:** The words in the following section came to Eliphaz from this strange and mysterious **spirit**.

i. "Whether it came from heaven or hell, we know not, for its communication shows and rankles a wound, without providing a cure." (Clarke)

2. (17-21) *What the spirit said.*

**'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
If He puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,
How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,**

**Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth?
They are broken in pieces from morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding.
Does not their own excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.”**

a. **Can a mortal be more righteous than God:** Eliphaz called attention to the common sinfulness of man. The idea is clear: “Job, we all sin. There is no great shame in admitting that you have sinned and that is why this calamity has come upon you.”

b. **If He charges His angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay:** Eliphaz made this interesting comment to point out man’s spiritual and moral frailty. He noted that even **angels** had fallen into **error**, therefore it should surprise no one that man – including Job – has also fallen into error.

i. This statement hit closer to the real truth than Eliphaz could know. It was one of these **angels** charged with **error** – Satan himself – who was the real cause of Job’s calamity. Satan also led a large number of angelic beings into rebellion against God (Rev 12:4; Rev 12:9). The Bible also says that in the age to come, redeemed man will in some way judge these fallen angels (1Co 6:3). Eliphaz was correct on this point: **He charges His angels with error.**

ii. “It is all very beautiful, but absolutely short-sighted. Eliphaz had no knowledge of those secret councils in heaven, and was making the mistake of attempting to press all things into the compass of his philosophy.” (Morgan)

iii. “The speaker seems serenely unconscious that he was saying anything that could drive a knife into the

tortured man. He is so carried along on the waves of his own eloquence, and so absorbed in the stringing together the elements of an artistic whole, that he forgets the very sorrows which he came to comfort.”
(Maclaren)

Job 5:1 Call out, Job. See if anyone answers. Is there any angel to whom you can turn?

Job 5:2 To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.

Job 5:3 I have seen fools who looked secure, but I called down a sudden curse on their homes.

Job 5:4 Their children can never find safety; no one stands up to defend them in court.

Job 5:5 Hungry people will eat the fool's crops—even the grain growing among thorns—and thirsty people will envy his wealth.

Job 5:6 Evil does not grow in the soil, nor does trouble grow out of the ground.

Job 5:7 No indeed! We bring trouble on ourselves, as surely as sparks fly up from a fire.

Job 5:8 If I were you, I would turn to God and present my case to him.

Job 5:9 We cannot understand the great things he does, and to his miracles there is no end.

Job 5:10 He sends rain on the land and he waters the fields.

Job 5:11 Yes, it is God who raises the humble and gives joy to all who mourn.

Job 5:12 (12-13) He upsets the plans of cunning people, and traps the wise in their own schemes, so that nothing they do succeeds;

Job 5:14 even at noon they grope in darkness.

Job 5:15 But God saves the poor from death; he saves the needy from oppression.

Job 5:16 He gives hope to the poor and silences the wicked.

Job 5:17 Happy is the person whom God corrects! Do not resent it when he rebukes you.

Job 5:18 God bandages the wounds he makes; his hand hurts you, and his hand heals.

Job 5:19 Time after time he will save you from harm;

Job 5:20 when famine comes, he will keep you alive, and in war protect you from death.

Job 5:21 God will rescue you from slander; he will save you when destruction comes.

Job 5:22 You will laugh at violence and hunger and not be afraid of wild animals.

Job 5:23 The fields you plow will be free of rocks; wild animals will never attack you.

Job 5:24 Then you will live at peace in your tent; when you look at your sheep, you will find them safe.

Job 5:25 You will have as many children as there are blades of grass in a pasture.

Job 5:26 Like wheat that ripens till harvest time, you will live to a ripe old age.

Job 5:27 Job, we have learned this by long study. It is true, so now accept it.

Job 5:1-27

Job 5 – Eliphaz Explains the Cause of Job’s Troubles

A. The fate of the foolish man.

1. (1-2) Eliphaz appeals to common wisdom.

“Call out now;

Is there anyone who will answer you?

**And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.**

a. **Call out now; is there anyone who will answer you:** Eliphaz begged his friend Job to listen to reason and to agree with the common wisdom regarding Job and his problem. If he would merely consult any godly person, they would tell him the same as Eliphaz did (**to which of the holy ones will you turn**).

b. **For wrath kills a foolish man:** Eliphaz did not directly accuse Job; he more suggested that Job do all he could to not be like a **foolish man** who would be killed by **wrath**.

2. (3-7) *The fate of the foolish man.*

**I have seen the foolish taking root,
But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.
His sons are far from safety,
They are crushed in the gate,
And *there is* no deliverer.
Because the hungry eat up his harvest,
Taking it even from the thorns,
And a snare snatches their substance.
For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble spring from the ground;
Yet man is born to trouble,
As the sparks fly upward."**

a. **His sons are far from safety:** These were backhanded references to Job and his own sons. Eliphaz argued that the fact that such great disaster fell upon them proves that they were foolish and in sin.

i. Again, we notice Eliphaz's frame of reference: **I have seen**. He speaks from his own experience and observation on life.

ii. **His sons are far from safety, they are crushed in the gate, and there is no deliverer:** "There is reference here to a custom which I have often had occasion to notice, that in the Eastern countries the *court-house*, or *tribunal of justice*, was at the gate of the city; here the magistrates attended, and hither the plaintiff and defendant came for justice." (Clarke)

b. **Affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble spring from the ground:** Eliphaz believed that this **trouble** did not come to Job from *nowhere*; it didn't just **spring from the ground**. The implication is clear: this **affliction** came upon Job *from God*.

i. "Trouble does not sprout up like weeds in the field. He was implying that one must sow and cultivate trouble." (Smick)

c. **Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward:** This point connects with the one Eliphaz just made. Trouble doesn't come to man from *nowhere*; it comes as a judgment from God, or at least because man has sown trouble so now he reaps it. Since just as it is true that **as the sparks fly upward**, it is also true that **man is born to trouble**, then it can also be said that all men sin and deserve the affliction and trouble that comes to them.

i. **As the sparks fly upward:** Literally, the Hebrew can be translated, *as the sons of Resheph fly upward*. "We cannot hope for further progress until we can find out who 'the sons of Resheph' are. Since Resheph is a Canaanite god about whom we now know a great deal, the possibility must now be faced that we have here another scrap of imagery from old myths." (Andersen)

B. Eliphaz defends God.

1. (8-16) *Eliphaz praises God's omnipotence and justice.*

**"But as for me, I would seek God,
And to God I would commit my cause;
Who does great things, and unsearchable,
Marvelous things without number.
He gives rain on the earth,
And sends waters on the fields.
He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.
He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.
He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon
them.
They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope at noontime as in the night.
But He saves the needy from the sword,
From the mouth of the mighty, And from their hand.
So the poor have hope,
And injustice shuts her mouth."**

a. **As for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause:** Eliphaz said it tactfully, yet he still said it – that Job was not seeking God and was not committing his cause to God in his affliction.

b. **Who does great things, and unsearchable, marvelous things without number:** According to the counsel of Eliphaz, this is *why* Job should seek God and commit his way to Him. It is because God is a great God, great in both His power over creation (**He gives rain on the earth**) and in His moral justice (**He frustrates the devices of the crafty... injustice shuts her mouth**).

i. Again, the implication is clear. Eliphaz believed that the justice of God, at this present time, worked *against* Job because Job was in sin and refused to see

it. Yet if Job would only see this and repent, perhaps the justice of God would once again work on his behalf.

ii. "These lines are a fine example of hymn genre in OT poetry. A similar creedal hymn appears in Isa 44:24-28. That is why the apostle Paul could cite a line from Job 5:13 in 1Co 3:19 : 'He catches the wise in their craftiness.' But in Eliphaz's case what is absolutely true is misapplied – the sick forum is not the place for theological strictures that may turn out to do more harm than good... Great truths misapplied only hurt more those who are already hurting." (Smick)

iii. **He saves the needy from the sword, from the mouth of the mighty:** "Thus the meaning is the same as in Psa 57:4; Psa 55:21; Psa 64:3... 'Mouth' is put for the *edge* of the sword." (Bullinger)

2. (17-26) *Eliphaz attributes Job's suffering to God's chastening for sin in his life.*

**"Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.**

**For He bruises, but He binds up;
He wounds, but His hands make whole.
He shall deliver you in six troubles,
Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.
In famine He shall redeem you from death,
And in war from the power of the sword.
You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,
And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.**

**You shall laugh at destruction and famine,
And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the**

field,
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.
You shall know that your tent *is* in peace;
You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.
You shall also know that your descendants *shall be*
many,
And your offspring like the grass of the earth.
You shall come to the grave at a full age,
As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.”

a. **Happy is the man whom God corrects:** With poetic power, Eliphaz emphasized his point that Job’s problems are because **God corrects** His sinful children, and Job is one of those sinful children.

b. **Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty:** Eliphaz did not wish to push Job into despair. He believed that Job should not **despise** this correcting work in his life, but instead humble himself under it, forsake his sin, and learn from it.

c. **He bruises, but He binds up... He shall deliver you in six troubles:** Eliphaz wanted to encourage Job further. “Job, God will heal your **wounds** and **deliver you** if you will confess your sin and turn to Him.” Eliphaz continued and described in detail all the blessings of restoration that would come to Job’s life if he would only repent and turn to God (**you shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue... you shall laugh at destruction and famine... you shall know that your tent is in peace**, and so on).

i. **You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue:** “Perhaps no evil is more dreadful than the *scourge of the tongue*: evil-speaking, detraction, backbiting, calumny, slander, tale-bearing, whispering, and scandalizing, are some of the terms which we use when endeavouring to express the baleful influence

and effects of that member, which is a *world of fire*, kindled from the nethermost hell." (Clarke)

ii. Spurgeon preached this sermon on the words "**You shall come to the grave at a full age, as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.**" These were his points of development regarding the death of a Christian:

- Death is *inevitable* (**You shall come**).
- Death is *acceptable* (**You shall come**).
- Death is *timely* (**at a full age**).
- Death is *honorable* (**as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season**).

iii. "Even as the color of the wheat is golden, so that it looks more beautiful than when the greenness of its verdure is on it, so the gray-headed man has a crown of glory on his head. He is glorious in his weakness, more than the young man in his strength, or the maiden in her beauty. Is not a shock of corn a beautiful picture of the state of man, moreover, because very soon it must be taken home? The reaper is coming." (Spurgeon)

3. (27) *Eliphaz declares his confidence in his words.*

"Behold, this we have searched out;

It is true.

Hear it, and know for yourself."

a. **Behold, this we have searched out:** Eliphaz wanted to persuade Job, so he gave his statement the authority of communal knowledge (**we have searched out**). "Job, all of us together here – your friends and counselors – have investigated this carefully and know what we are talking about."

i. It is worth remembering that the LORD singled Eliphaz out at the end of the book for a special rebuke: *the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has"* (Job 42:7). "Eliphaz's fault is not that his doctrine is unsound; it is his ineptness as a counselor. True words may be thin medicine for a man in the depths." (Andersen)

ii. "One thing is clear. The words of Eliphaz, however well meant, fall wide of their mark. Truth after truth has been uttered by him. But these truths bring no comfort or conviction to his afflicted friend. To him this wholesome food seems poison." (Bradley)

b. **It is true:** Eliphaz said this with absolute confidence. "Job, God's principle of cause and effect together with your reaction to your calamity proves that you were and are in sin and you must repent to be restored." To Eliphaz and the rest of Job's friends, this was so obvious that it did not need to be proven; he simply confidently explained, "

It is true."

i. "It is not what Eliphaz knew that is wrong; it is what he was ignorant of – God's hidden purpose – that made all his beautiful poetry and grand truth only a snare to Job." (Smick)

ii. "Aspirin is a good and effective medicine. But it is useless against cancer. Similarly, so much of the advice that Eliphaz and the other friends dole out is, in its own right, correct and good and true. But because it is wrongly applied it becomes useless. More than useless, it is a lie." (Mason)

iii. Eliphaz preaches a God who can be *figured out*. For Eliphaz, there are no unknowns behind the scenes; there is no drama or purpose in the heavens that motivate what God does and what He allows to be done. However, *we know this heavenly drama* from the first two chapters, and we see how shallow and unknowing the counsel of Eliphaz was. Job didn't *know* what we know, but he could *feel* that the counsel of Eliphaz was wrong in his situation.

iv. "Preconceptions exist in our own head; if we start out with the preconception that God will never allow the innocent to perish and then we see a righteous man perishing, we will have to say, 'You cannot be a righteous man, because my preconception tells me that if you were, God would not allow you to suffer; therefore you are proved to be a bad man.'" (Chambers) It was this exact reasoning on the part of the religious authorities of Jesus' day that motivated them to put Him on the cross, and to mock Him at His crucifixion.

v. The famous atheist Huxley said, "I object to Christians – they know too much about God." So did Eliphaz and his friends. "If the study of the Book of Job is making us reverent with what we don't understand, we are gaining insight. There is suffering before which you cannot say a word... all you can do is remain dumb and leave room for God to come in as He likes." (Chambers)

c. **Hear it, and know for yourself:** In the mind of Eliphaz, Job only needed to accept these obvious truths in order to find the answers to his current crisis.

i. "Their persistent mistake was that of attempting to explain everything by their knowledge which, spacious as it was, was altogether too narrow." (Morgan)

ii. "The speech ends with a somewhat self-complacent exhortation to the poor, tortured man: 'We have searched it, so it is.' We wise men pledge our wisdom and our reputation that this is true. Great is authority. An ounce of sympathy would have done more to commend the doctrine than a ton of dogmatic self-confidence." (Maclaren)

iii. "It is one of the supreme ironies of this book that only after the arrival of these three bosom friends of his does Job really lose a grip on himself and fall off the edge into despair. Their pedantic theology, their reforming zeal, and their subtle slights are more than the poor man can take, and undoubtedly this backhanded betrayal by his friends is Job's final and most severe trial." (Mason)

Job Replies: My Complaint Is Just

Job 6:1 (1-2) If my troubles and griefs were weighed on scales,

Job 6:3 they would weigh more than the sands of the sea, so my wild words should not surprise you.

Job 6:4 Almighty God has shot me with arrows, and their poison spreads through my body. God has lined up his terrors against me.

Job 6:5 A donkey is content when eating grass, and a cow is quiet when eating hay.

Job 6:6 But who can eat flat, unsalted food? What taste is there in the white of an egg?

Job 6:7 I have no appetite for food like that, and everything I eat makes me sick.

Job 6:8 Why won't God give me what I ask? Why won't he answer my prayer?

Job 6:9 If only he would go ahead and kill me!

Job 6:10 If I knew he would, I would leap for joy, no matter how great my pain. I know that God is holy; I have never opposed what he commands.

Job 6:11 What strength do I have to keep on living? Why go on living when I have no hope?

Job 6:12 Am I made of stone? Is my body bronze?

Job 6:13 I have no strength left to save myself; there is nowhere I can turn for help.

Job 6:14 In trouble like this I need loyal friends—whether I've forsaken God or not.

Job 6:15 But you, my friends, you deceive me like streams that go dry when no rain comes.

Job 6:16 The streams are choked with snow and ice,

Job 6:17 but in the heat they disappear, and the stream beds lie bare and dry.

Job 6:18 Caravans get lost looking for water; they wander and die in the desert.

Job 6:19 Caravans from Sheba and Tema search,

Job 6:20 but their hope dies beside dry streams.

Job 6:21 You are like those streams to me, you see my fate and draw back in fear.

Job 6:22 Have I asked you to give me a gift or to bribe someone on my behalf

Job 6:23 or to save me from some enemy or tyrant?

Job 6:24 All right, teach me; tell me my faults. I will be quiet and listen to you.

Job 6:25 Honest words are convincing, but you are talking nonsense.

Job 6:26 You think I am talking nothing but wind; then why do you answer my words of despair?

Job 6:27 You would even roll dice for orphan slaves and make yourselves rich off your closest friends!

Job 6:28 Look me in the face. I won't lie.

Job 6:29 You have gone far enough. Stop being unjust. Don't condemn me. I'm in the right.

Job 6:30 But you think I am lying—you think I can't tell right from wrong.

Job 6:1-30

Job 6 – Job Replies to Eliphaz: “What Does Your Arguing Prove?”

A. Job laments his affliction.

1. (1-7) Job explains his rash words.

Then Job answered and said:

**“Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,
And my calamity laid with it on the scales!
For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea;
Therefore my words have been rash.
For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;
My spirit drinks in their poison;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.
Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass,
Or does the ox low over its fodder?
Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?
Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
My soul refuses to touch them;
They *are* as loathsome food to me.”**

a. **Then Job answered and said:** Job's friends were kind enough to sit with him in sympathetic silence for some seven days (Job 2:13). Job broke the silence with an anguished rant (Job 3), and Eliphaz responded with a poetic call to repentance (Job 4-5). Now, Job will answer the words of Eliphaz the Temanite.

b. **Oh, that my grief were fully weighed:** Job's first response to the words of Eliphaz were to complain about the greatness of his suffering, because Eliphaz only made

his suffering worse, with his well-intentioned but wrong analysis of Job's problem.

i. This was not only Job's feeling; it was also the judgment of God as revealed at the end of the Book of Job, where He said of Eliphaz and Job's other counselors: *You have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has* (Job 42:7).

c. **Therefore my words have been rash:** Job's outburst in Job 3 did not curse God, but it did come close. Job here admitted that his words were indeed **rash**, but explained that it was because of the excessive heaviness of his grief.

i. "Job declared, in effect, that he did not understand the cry because he did not know the pain." (Morgan)

d. **The arrows of the Almighty are within me:** Job explained why his suffering was so deep and his words were so rash. It was because he felt that God Himself had attacked and cursed him. He felt that God had shot **arrows** at him; had sent **poison** against him; and had **arrayed** His **terrors** against Job.

i. Job both opened (Job 6:4) and closed (Job 7:20) this speech with the picture of God shooting arrows in him. "There is an evident reference here to *wounds inflicted by poisoned arrows*, and to the burning fever occasioned by such *wounds*, producing such an intense parching thirst as to dry up all the moisture in the system, stop all the salivary ducts, thicken and inflame the blood, induce putrescency, and terminate in raging mania, producing the most terrifying images, from which the patient is relieved only by death." (Clarke)

ii. "*Arrows*; so fitly calls his afflictions, because, like arrows, they came upon him swiftly and suddenly,

one after another, and that from on high, and they wounded him deeply and deadlily." (Poole)

e. **Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg:** Job described how the words of Eliphaz "tasted" to him. They were weak and flavorless, and certainly did not give Job any health or strength.

i. "The speech, also, to which Job had listened from Eliphaz the Temanite did not put much sweetness into his mouth; for it was devoid of sympathy and consolation. If you read it at home you will see that it was worthy to be the first of a singular selection of galling utterances... He had spoken as harshly and severely as if he were a judge addressing a criminal who was suffering no more than he deserved." (Spurgeon)

f. **Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass:** Job insisted that he had *reason* for his grief. The **donkey** doesn't **bray** and the **ox** doesn't **low** when they have enough food; in the same analogy, Job isn't complaining without reason.

i. "The wail is always evident of a want. The wild ass does not bray when he has grass, nor the ox over his fodder." (Morgan)

2. (8-10) *Job longs for God to grant the escape of death.*

**"Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
Then I would still have comfort;
Though in anguish, I would exult,
He will not spare;
For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."**

a. **That it would please God to crush me:** Job returns to the theme of his complaint from Job 3, where he mourned the day of his birth and believed he would be better off dead. Though Job never seems to have contemplated suicide, he wished God Himself would end his life.

i. "When the answer does not come, when instead of the release of cutting off, we have the continuity of pain, and a great silence, then let us remember this story: and remain confident that there is some explanation, and that when it comes, we shall thank God that He did not give us our request." (Morgan)

b. **That He would loose His hand and cut me off:** The idea may again have God as an archer shooting arrows at Job. He pleads that God might simply launch more arrows and end his life (**cut me off**).

c. **I have not concealed the words of the Holy One:** Here, Job again insists on his basic innocence before God. The calamity in his life was not due to some sin such as concealing **the words of the Holy One** (perhaps better translated as *that I had not denied the words of the Holy One*, as in the NIV).

i. "With the sense that I have not *denied* or disobeyed *the words of the Holy One*. I should die calmly, for I should die innocent." (Bradley)

ii. "He would have one consolation left before he died – that he had not denied the words of the Holy One, though he emphatically rejected the words of Eliphaz." (Smick)

iii. If Job sensed a responsibility to not deny or conceal **the words of the Holy One**, we have an even greater responsibility. "Did you listen to that splendid sermon? What rhetoric! What oratory! But

those poor people in the aisles did not understand a word, or if they did they only comprehended disconnected sentences, and lost the soul of the discourse. Is this right? Is this according to the Scriptural idea of preaching?... If the next generation should become more wicked than the present, and still more ignorant of the gospel, the fact will be chargeable upon those who conceal the words of God today." (Spurgeon)

3. (11-13) Job laments his weakness.

**"What strength do I have, that I should hope?
And what *is* my end, that I should prolong my life?
Is my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh bronze?
Is my help not within me?
And is success driven from me?"**

a. **What strength do I have, that I should hope:** Job reflected the sense of hopelessness of the severe and chronic sufferer. Sensing no inner **strength** to meet the present and future challenges, he felt no **hope** at all.

i. We can sense the depth of Job's anguish: **Is my strength the strength of stones? Is my flesh bronze?**

b. **Is my help not within me:** We should not think that Job was like a motivational self-help speaker encouraging himself to looking within for a hidden resource of **help**. Instead these words from the pain-wracked man sitting on a burned-out place in a garbage dump indicate Job's absolute sense of *helplessness*. If Job's only help was **within** him, then he had no **help**. Indeed, all **success** is **driven from** him.

i. The NIV translation of Job 6:13 is helpful: *Do I have any power to help myself, now that success has*

been driven from me?

ii. "The words of Job can bring immense comfort for the simple reason that many sufferers have felt rage but have been too ashamed to express it." (Smick)

B. Job challenges Eliphaz.

1. (14-23) Job criticizes Eliphaz and defends himself.

"To him who is afflicted, kindness *should be shown* by his friend,

Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook,

Like the streams of the brooks that pass away,

Which are dark because of the ice,

***And* into which the snow vanishes.**

When it is warm, they cease to flow;

When it is hot, they vanish from their place.

The paths of their way turn aside,

They go nowhere and perish.

The caravans of Tema look,

The travelers of Sheba hope for them.

They are disappointed because they were confident;

They come there and are confused.

For now you are nothing,

You see terror and are afraid.

Did I ever say, 'Bring *something* to me'?

Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth'?

Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand'?

Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of oppressors'?"

a. **Kindness should be shown by his friend:** Job here made his most basic accusation against Eliphaz: "You should show me kindness, even if it were true that I had forsaken **the fear of the Almighty.**"

b. **My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook:** Even though only Eliphaz had previously spoken, Job

addressed his **brothers** collectively. Either this was out of politeness (not wanting to single out Eliphaz), or because Job believed that the attitude and silence of his other companions meant they agreed with Eliphaz. Job accused them of being as unreliable as a snow-fed stream that vanishes when it is hot.

i. "Incidentally this touch supports our suspicion that Job's homeland was to the east of the Lebanon complex, rather than near Edom, where snow waters would not be seen." (Andersen)

ii. "How great a contrast to the love and friendship of Jesus! Not like a brook that dries in the time of drought, but like a well of water springing up within the heart for ever." (Meyer)

iii. **For now you are nothing, you see terror and are afraid:** "Verse 21 is the climax of Job's reaction to his friends' counsel. They offered no help. The verse is like a sermon about the special strength needed to be willing to make oneself available when we see others in a truly dreadful condition. The risk involved makes us afraid." (Smick)

c. **Did I ever say:** Job wasn't asking his friends to pay him money or to ransom him from kidnappers. All he wanted was some words of comfort, and he heard none.

2. (24-30) Job challenges his friends to point out his error and lack of discernment.

**"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;
Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
How forceful are right words!
But what does your arguing prove?
Do you intend to rebuke *my* words,
And the speeches of a desperate one, *which* are as
wind?**

**Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless,
And you undermine your friend.
Now therefore, be pleased to look at me;
For I would never lie to your face.
Yield now, let there be no injustice!
Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands!
Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?"**

a. **Do you intend to rebuke my words, and the speeches of a desperate one:** Job believed that Eliphaz was unduly harsh in his reply and failed to see that Job's rant recorded in Chapter 3 was made up only of **words** from a **desperate one**.

i. "Throughout the dialogue they make veiled accusations, deliver general moral pronouncements, hum and haw, and equivocate. But all their insinuations are without substance, and by way of actually identifying and getting at the root of Job's problem... the best they can do is suggest that his 'attitude' is all wrong." (Mason)

ii. Eliphaz, in his insensitivity, acted as if Job's words were **as wind**. "Do you take me for a desperate and distracted man, who knows not or cares not what he saith, but only speaks what comes first into his mind and mouth? The *wind* is oft used to express vain words, as Job 15:2; Jer 5:13; and vain things, Job 7:7; Pro 11:29." (Poole)

iii. Instead of comforting Job, Eliphaz was as bad as someone who would **overwhelm the fatherless** and **undermine** his **friend**. "Now he seems to retaliate with charges of his own: You would even gamble over an orphan and *bargain over your friend*. This is pretty rough stuff. There is no more indication that the friends gambled for orphans than there is that Job

asked for bribes. Perhaps this is what Job is getting at. But their relationship has certainly deteriorated if they are already swapping insults like this.” (Andersen)

b. **Now therefore, be pleased to look at me:** “Here it appears that throughout Job’s speech the friends have been hanging their heads and refusing to meet his gaze, while in an odd reversal of roles the sick man now holds his head high and looks his sleek and healthy inquisitors straight in the eye.” (Mason)

c. **Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands:** Job very much wanted Eliphaz and his other friends to see that his present calamity was *not* judgment for some grievous (though hidden) sin.

i. The words “**teach me,**” “**cause me,**” “**what does your arguing prove,**” and “**concede**” are all demands for evidence and proof. “He turns to Eliphaz and says, ‘You say that I’m suffering because of sin, but you’ve never pointed anything out specifically. Teach me and tell me what my sin is. But until you do, there’s no proof of your argument.’” (Lawson)

ii. Because we know the story-behind-the-story from Job 1, 2, we understand this to be true. Yet Job’s friends have a very hard time believing this, and will continue the contention with Job over this point.

d. **Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory:** Previously in this chapter, Job has represented the words of Eliphaz as bits of food; bits that were very unsatisfying to Job in his present suffering.

- According to the analogy of animals, if the words of Eliphaz had comforted and satisfied Job, he would not have cried out as he did in Job 3 (Job 6:5).

- The words of Eliphaz were like flavorless food (Job 6:6).
- The words of Eliphaz were like rotten, loathsome food (Job 6:7).
- Job can **discern** the **unsavory** character of the words of Eliphaz (Job 6:30).

Job Continues: My Life Has No Hope

Job 7:1 Human life is like forced army service, like a life of hard manual labor,

Job 7:2 like a slave longing for cool shade; like a worker waiting to be paid.

Job 7:3 Month after month I have nothing to live for; night after night brings me grief.

Job 7:4 When I lie down to sleep, the hours drag; I toss all night and long for dawn.

Job 7:5 My body is full of worms; it is covered with scabs; pus runs out of my sores.

Job 7:6 My days pass by without hope, pass faster than a weaver's shuttle.

Job 7:7 Remember, O God, my life is only a breath; my happiness has already ended.

Job 7:8 You see me now, but never again. If you look for me, I'll be gone.

Job 7:9 (9-10) Like a cloud that fades and is gone, we humans die and never return; we are forgotten by all who knew us.

Job 7:11 No! I can't be quiet! I am angry and bitter. I have to speak.

Job 7:12 Why do you keep me under guard? Do you think I am a sea monster?

Job 7:13 I lie down and try to rest; I look for relief from my pain.

Job 7:14 But you—you terrify me with dreams; you send me visions and nightmares

Job 7:15 until I would rather be strangled than live in this miserable body.

Job 7:16 I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense.

Job 7:17 Why are people so important to you? Why pay attention to what they do?

Job 7:18 You inspect them every morning and test them every minute.

Job 7:19 Won't you look away long enough for me to swallow my spit?

Job 7:20 Are you harmed by my sin, you jailer? Why use me for your target practice? Am I so great a burden to you?

Job 7:21 Can't you ever forgive my sin? Can't you pardon the wrong I do? Soon I will be in my grave, and I'll be gone when you look for me.

Job 7:1-21

Job 7 – In Response to Eliphaz, Job Cries Out to God

A. The comfortless suffering of Job.

1. (1-5) The hard service of Job's suffering.

**"Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth?
Are not his days also like the days of a hired man?
Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade,
And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages,
So I have been allotted months of futility,
And wearisome nights have been appointed to me.
When I lie down, I say,
'When shall I arise,
And the night be ended?'
For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn.**

**My flesh is caked with worms and dust,
My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh."**

a. **I have been allotted months of futility:** Job saw his present suffering like the futile, discouraging work of a **servant** or a **hired man**. He felt there was no hope or reward, only weariness.

i. The words **hard service** in Job 7:1 are (according to Adam Clarke and others) descriptive of *military service*. The Latin Vulgate translates, *The life of man is a warfare upon earth*. The early English Coverdale translation has it, *Is not the life of man upon earth a very battle?* With this, Job communicated both the *struggle* of life, together with the idea that he has been drafted unwillingly into this battle.

b. **Wearisome nights have been appointed to me:** Job described his physical condition in painful terms. He suffered from insomnia and his skin affliction came back again and again.

i. Clarke on **My flesh is caked with worms:** "The figure is too horrid to be farther illustrated."

2. (6-10) *Job mourns the futility of life.*

**"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
Oh, remember that my life *is* a breath!
My eye will never again see good.
The eye of him who sees me will see me no *more*;
While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer *be*.
As the cloud disappears and vanishes away,
So he who goes down to the grave does not come up.
He shall never return to his house,
Nor shall his place know him anymore."**

a. **My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle:** Job did not mean this in a positive sense, as in saying, "My,

look how fast the time is going by.” As described in the previous verses, in this season of affliction time is dragging by for Job through his sleepless and painful nights. Yet when he looked at his life in totality, it seemed to be a meaningless blur, **spent without hope** and as a **breath**.

i. “Ibn Ezra noted long ago the play on the word [*tiqwah*, ‘hope’], which can also mean ‘thread.’ Job’s days move fast like a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end through want of thread. Both meanings were equally intended. This is the kind of overtone in meaning that cannot be reflected in a translation without a footnote.” (Smick)

ii. “Worse than the disease itself, Job lost all hope of being healed. He believed his only release from pain was death.” (Smick)

b. **So he who goes down to the grave does not come up:** This is one of Job’s statements about the afterlife that are sprinkled throughout the book. These statements are a combination of uncertainty (as here) and triumphant confidence (as in Job 19:25-26).

B. Job’s complaint to God.

1. (11-16) *Job’s anguish: “My soul chooses strangling.”*

**“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
Am I a sea, or a sea serpent,
That You set a guard over me?
When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,’
Then You scare me with dreams
And terrify me with visions,
So that my soul chooses strangling**

**And death rather than my body.
I loathe *my life*;
I would not live forever.
Let me alone,
For my days are *but a breath*."**

a. **I will speak in the anguish of my spirit:** Job here cried out to God, first wondering if he were not a dangerous creature (**as sea, or a sea serpent**) that needed to be guarded and restrained by God.

i. "We hear of persons being 'shadowed' by the police, and certain people feel as if they were shadowed by God; they are mysteriously tracked by the great Spirit, and they know and feel it. Wherever they go, an eye is upon them, and they cannot hide from it." (Spurgeon)

ii. "Listen. *To argue from our insignificance is poor pleading*; for the little things are just those against which there is most need to watch. If you were a sea, or a whale, God might leave you alone; but as you are a feeble and sinful creature, which can do more hurt than a sea, or a whale, you need constant watching... Do not say, 'Am I a sea, or a sea-monster, that thou settest a watch over me?' for the Lord may answer, 'You are more capacious for evil than a sea, and more wild than a sea-monster.'" (Spurgeon)

iii. Indeed, we are more like the sea or the sea-monster than we would like to admit.

- The sea is restless, and so is our nature.
- The sea can be furious and terrible, and so can we.
- The sea can never be satisfied, and neither can sinful man.
- The sea is mischievous and destructive, and so is sinful man.

- The sea will not obey, and neither will sinful man.
- iv. Job's words here remind us of something remarkable. Though his physical suffering was intense and prolonged, as John Trapp wrote, "His greatest troubles were inward." Job's spiritual crisis was deeper than his physical or material crisis.
- b. **You scare me with dreams:** Job was denied even the comfort of sleep and rest. When he did lay down to sleep (upon his **bed** or **couch**), he was disturbed with nightmarish **dreams** and terrifying **visions**.
 - i. "He needed rest by sleep, but was afraid to close his eyes because of the horrid images which were presented to his imagination. Could there be a state more deplorable than this?" (Clarke)
- c. **So that my soul chooses strangling... I loathe my life:** Job's condition is so miserable that, at this point, his **soul** would prefer the release of death.
 - i. Job was so miserable that he just said to God, "**Let me alone.**" "At this moment it appears to Job that God is the tormentor. The reader knows God was using in secondary means and that Job's conception of God as tormentor was askew." (Smick)

2. (17-21) *Job appeals to God: "Have I sinned?"*

**"What *is* man, that You should exalt him,
 That You should set Your heart on him,
 That You should visit him every morning,
 And test him every moment?
 How long?
 Will You not look away from me,
 And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?
 Have I sinned?
 What have I done to You, O watcher of men?
 Why have You set me as Your target,**

**So that I am a burden to myself?
Why then do You not pardon my transgression,
And take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust,
And You will seek me diligently,
But I *will* no longer *be*."**

a. **What is man, that You should exalt him... And test him every moment:** Job felt at this moment that God's attention was unwelcome. If all his calamity was from the hand of God, Job wondered why God could not simply leave him alone.

i. "The language of verse 17 is too similar to that of Psalms 8 to be a coincidence. Scholars are divided as to which came first." (Andersen) It would seem best to say that the lines from Job came first, and that David in Psalms 8 re-worked Job's painful theme into one filled with praise.

ii. Job asked, "**What is man?**" but he didn't wait for the answer. "Man is more than we guess, else God would never take such time and pains with him. When a lapidary spends years over a single diamond, the most careless observer begins to appraise properly its intrinsic value." (Meyer)

iii. **Till I swallow my saliva:** "An Arabic idiom, *for one instant*; Just as we say 'The twinkling of an eye' to express the same idea." (Bullinger) Job wondered why God could not look away from him for just the smallest moment.

b. **What have I done to You, O watcher of men:** "Please, God, just leave me alone. How have I wronged You?" Job could not understand why he seemed to be God's **target**; and if Job had sinned to cause all his suffering, he asked God "**Why then do You not pardon my transgression?**"

i. Job was so honest with God in passages like Job 7:20 that they seem to have been altered by Jewish scribes who were uncomfortable with his bold honesty with God. According to Smick, "Ancient scribal tradition and the LXX show the original reading" to be *Have I become a burden to you?* Most translations, following later Hebrew manuscripts, have it **I am burden to myself**. Yet probably the original text shows how deep Job's grief is, feeling himself to be a burden to what feels like an unloving and uncaring God.

ii. Job wondered why God bothered with him at all. "Its simple meaning was that God is so great that even if a man did sin, it cannot affect Him. The answer is that this was altogether too small a thought of God: the truth being that God is so great that He is affected, wounded, robbed by human sin. Job was, like his friends, hindered by a philosophy too narrow." (Morgan)

iii. Once more, we benefit from knowing the story-behind-the-story, which Job and his friends do not know at this point in the narrative. Job believed that God was against him and was punishing him, but it wasn't true. "Job was not being punished; he was being honored. God was giving to him a name like that of the great ones of the earth. The Lord was lifting him up, promoting him, putting him into the front rank, making a great saint of him, causing him to become one of the fathers and patterns in the ancient Church of God. He was really doing for Job such extraordinarily good things that you or I, in looking back upon his whole history, might well say, 'I would be quite content to take Job's afflictions if I might also have Job's grace, and Job's place in the Church of God.'" (Spurgeon)

c. **Now I will lie down in the dust, and You will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be:** Job wished he could escape both life and God by going to the **dust** (his grave). This is one of his obviously pessimistic passages about the afterlife.

i. "All Job has known about God he still believes. But God's inexplicable ways have his mind perplexed to the breaking-point. Job is in the right; but he does not know that God is watching with silent compassion and admiration until the test is fully done and it is time to state His approval publicly (

Job 42:8)."

ii. "We like to talk about 'having the faith to be healed,' but what about having the faith to be sick?" (Mason)

Bildad Speaks: Job Should Repent

Job 8:1 (1-2) Are you finally through with your windy speech?

Job 8:3 God never twists justice; he never fails to do what is right.

Job 8:4 Your children must have sinned against God, and so he punished them as they deserved.

Job 8:5 But turn now and plead with Almighty God;

Job 8:6 if you are so honest and pure, then God will come and help you and restore your household as your reward.

Job 8:7 All the wealth you lost will be nothing compared with what God will give you then.

Job 8:8 Look for a moment at ancient wisdom; consider the truths our ancestors learned.

Job 8:9 Our life is short, we know nothing at all; we pass like shadows across the earth.

Job 8:10 But let the ancient wise people teach you; listen to what they had to say:

Job 8:11 "Reeds can't grow where there is no water; they are never found outside a swamp.

Job 8:12 If the water dries up, they are the first to wither, while still too small to be cut and used.

Job 8:13 Godless people are like those reeds; their hope is gone, once God is forgotten.

Job 8:14 They trust a thread—a spider's web.

Job 8:15 If they lean on a web, will it hold them up? If they grab for a thread, will it help them stand?"

Job 8:16 Evil people sprout like weeds in the sun, like weeds that spread all through the garden.

Job 8:17 Their roots wrap around the stones and hold fast to every rock.

Job 8:18 But then pull them up—no one will ever know they were there.

Job 8:19 Yes, that's all the joy evil people have; others now come and take their places.

Job 8:20 But God will never abandon the faithful or ever give help to evil people.

Job 8:21 He will let you laugh and shout again,

Job 8:22 but he will bring disgrace on those who hate you, and the homes of the wicked will vanish.

Job 8:1-22

Job 8 – The First Speech of Bildad

A. Bildad rebukes Job.

1. (1-7) If Job was righteous, God would bless and defend him.

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

"How long will you speak these *things*,

**And the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?
Does God subvert judgment?
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?
If your sons have sinned against Him,
He has cast them away for their transgression.
If you would earnestly seek God
And make your supplication to the Almighty,
If you *were* pure and upright,
Surely now He would awake for you,
And prosper your rightful dwelling place.
Though your beginning was small,
Yet your latter end would increase abundantly."**

a. **How long will you speak these things:** Bildad (whom some think was a descendant of Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah, as in Gen 25:1-2) now speaks. He rebuked Job for Job's rebuke of Eliphaz, who had previously rebuked Job. Bildad dismissed Job's defense as recorded in Job 6-7 as **a strong wind**.

i. "He does not begin as courteously as Eliphaz, but accuses Job bluntly of being a windbag, vehement but empty." (Andersen) "There is not a word of apology, or any touch of friendly sympathy. There is no attempt to soothe and calm the sufferer." (Bradley)

ii. "If Eliphaz strikes us as the most refined member of this group, comparatively flexible and sophisticated, then Bildad the Shuhite comes across as the staunch, ramrod traditionalist, the one who sees all issues in black and white and who prides himself on his straightforward, no-nonsense approach." (Mason)

iii. Bildad was quick to rebuke Job for his strong words, but he did not stop to consider *why* Job spoke this way. He heard Job's words, but did not consider his pain.

b. **Does the Almighty pervert justice:** Bildad's confidence is in the justice of God; in the idea that Job could only receive such calamity from God as the punishment for some sin.

i. Bildad was brash enough to throw the death of Job's sons before his face (**If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression**). "There is not only steely indifference to Job's plight but an arrogant certainty that Job's children got just what they deserved and that Job was well on his way to the same fate." (Smick)

ii. "Job's *children* must have sinned. This is getting near the bone; for Job had been concerned about this very point and, by sacrifice, had provided against even their hidden sins." (Andersen)

c. **If you would earnestly seek God... If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you:** Bildad was like everyone else in this drama, unable to see the drama behind the scenes in the heavenly realm. Therefore, his only way of interpreting Job's situation was to apply the principle of cause and effect and to call Job to repentance.

i. This encouragement to **earnestly seek God** comes right after the condemnation of Job's sons. "He cut *them off* in their sins, but he spares *thee*; and this is a proof that he waits to be gracious to thee." (Clarke)

ii. For Job, this was hollow, "look on the bright side" advice. "The 'gospel of temperament' works very well if you are suffering only from psychical neuralgia, so to speak, and all you need is a cup of tea; but if you have a real deep complaint, the injunction to 'Cheer up' is an insult. What is the use of telling a woman who has lost her husband and sons in the war to 'Cheer up and look on the bright side'? There *is* no

bright side, it is absolute blackness, and if God cannot come to her help, truly she is in a pitiable condition.” (Chambers)

iii. Yet notice that Bildad said, **if you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you.** “So Bildad spoke, suggesting that Job was not pure and upright, since God did not appear to deliver him.” (Meyer)

d. **Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly:** When Bildad said this, he was both wrong and right.

i. He was wrong in that he assumed that because Job was not currently in prosperity and abundance, it proved that Job had not made **supplication** and was not **pure and upright**. “He wished to prove that Job could not possibly be an upright man, for if he were so, he here affirms that his prosperity would increase continually.” (Spurgeon)

ii. He was right in that Job, in the end of it, did **increase abundantly**. “It is true, as indeed the facts of the book of Job prove: for Job did greatly increase in his latter end. His beginning was small: he was brought down to poverty! To the potsherd and to the dunghill he had many graves, but no children; he had had many losses, he had now nothing left to lose; and yet God did awake for him; his righteousness came out from the darkness which had eclipsed it; he shone in sevenfold prosperity so that the words of Bildad were prophetic, though he knew it not; God put into his mouth language which did come true, after all.” (Spurgeon)

2. (8-10) *Job should respect ancient wisdom.*

**"For inquire, please, of the former age,
And consider the things discovered by their fathers;
For we were *born* yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days on earth are a shadow.
Will they not teach you and tell you,
And utter words from their heart?"**

a. **Inquire, please, of the former age:** Bildad asked Job to consult the wisdom of the ages and to consider what they had to **teach** and **tell** Job.

i. "If Job would only take the time to consider ancient tradition, he would find that God only does right. Sinners get just punishment, and good men are blessed with health and prosperity." (Smick)

ii. Bildad quoted the ancients, but even in ancient Biblical history they could see that there is not an easily seen correlation between righteousness and blessing. Even at the beginning of time, Abel was righteous but was rewarded with murder from his brother Cain.

iii. "The biggest benediction one man can find in another is not in his words, but that he implies: 'I do not know the answer to your problem, all I can say is that God alone must know; let us go to Him'... The biggest thing you can do for those who are suffering is not to talk platitudes, not to ask questions, but to get into contact with God, and the 'greater works' will be done by prayer." (Chambers)

b. **For we were born yesterday, and know nothing:** Bildad gave Job a graceful excuse for what he considered to be his previous foolishness. It was simply because Job did not consider and consult ancient wisdom.

i. **Our days on earth are a shadow:** "The following beautiful motto I have seen on a sundial: Unbrae

sumus! 'We are shadows!'... Such as time *is*, such are *you*; as fleeting, as transitory, as unsubstantial. These *shadows* lost, *time* is lost; *time* lost, *soul* lost! Reader take heed!" (Clarke)

ii. "To be sure, we can today learn from the past, but the past must be a rudder to guide us into the future and not an anchor to hold us back. The fact that something was said years ago is no guarantee that it is right. The past contains as much folly as wisdom." (Wiersbe, cited in Lawson)

B. Bildad applies his common-sense wisdom to Job's situation.

1. (11-18) *The rule of cause and effect applied to Job's situation.*

"Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?

Can the reeds flourish without water?

While it *is* yet green *and* not cut down,

It withers before any *other* plant.

So *are* the paths of all who forget God;

And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish,

Whose confidence shall be cut off,

And whose trust *is* a spider's web.

He leans on his house, but it does not stand.

He holds it fast, but it does not endure.

He grows green in the sun,

And his branches spread out in his garden.

His roots wrap around the rock heap,

***And* look for a place in the stones.**

If he is destroyed from his place,

Then *it* will deny him, *saying*, 'I have not seen you.'"

a. **Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh:** Bildad used the example of the growing **papyrus** to illustrate two things. First, it shows the principle of cause and effect,

because the water causes it to grow. Second, it is a fragile growth that **withers before any other plant**.

i. These **reeds** are like the hypocrite or the one who makes a mere show of faith without true trust in God. Spurgeon used Bildad's illustration of papyrus reed in Job 8:11-18 as a description of the hypocrite.

- Like the reed, hypocrites grow up quickly.
- Like the reed, hypocrites are hollow and without substance.
- Like the reed, hypocrites are easily bent.
- Like the reed, hypocrites can lower their head in false humility.
- Like the reed, hypocrites bear no fruit.

ii. **It withers before any other plant:** "Long before the Lord comes to cut the hypocrite down, it often happens that he dries up for want of the mire on which he lives. The excitement, the encouragement, the example, the profit, the respectability, the prosperity, upon which he lived fail him, and he fails too." (Spurgeon)

b. **So are the paths of all who forget God:** Even as the papyrus quickly withers and dies, so will all those who turn their back on God. He may prosper for a time, but will ultimately come to ruin.

i. "A *spider's web*; which though it be formed with great art and industry, and may do much mischief to others, yet is most slender and feeble, and easily swept down or pulled in pieces, and unable to defend the spider that made it." (Poole)

ii. Bildad used powerful and vivid pictures from the natural world, but he misapplied them to Job as if he were a sinning, shallow hypocrite. "If you take an

illustration from Nature and apply it to a man's moral life or spiritual life, you will not be true to facts because the natural law does not work in the spiritual world... God says, 'And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten...'; that is not a natural law, and yet it is what happens in the spiritual world." (Chambers)

iii. "Again we have to say Bildad was quite right in his statements of truth, and quite wrong in his intended deductions so far as Job was concerned." (Morgan)

2. (19-22) *God's promise of blessing to the blameless.*

**"Behold, this is the joy of His way,
And out of the earth others will grow.
Behold, God will not cast away the blameless,
Nor will He uphold the evildoers.
He will yet fill your mouth with laughing,
And your lips with rejoicing.
Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
And the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing."**

a. **This is the joy of His way... God will not cast away the blameless:** Bildad's message was blunter and less diplomatic than that of Eliphaz, but his basic message was the same. Job could once again come to a place of **joy** and **laughing** if he would turn to God again.

i. "In his simple theology everything can be explained in terms of two kinds of men – the blameless (*tam*, Job 8:20 a; used of Job in 1:1) and the secretly wicked (*hanep*, Job 8:13 b). Outwardly the same, God distinguishes them by prospering the one and destroying the other." (Andersen)

b. **Those who hate you will be clothed with shame:** Job's frustration was rising because of these contentious

dialogues with his friends. After the harsh words between Eliphaz and Job (Job 4-5, 6-7), Bildad invited Job to find vindication through repentance.

i. Bildad had his wisdom of the ancients and his own belief system, both of which agreed and seemed unshakable. What he did not really have was *God Himself*. Bildad and the other counselors of Job talk a lot, but what they do not do is *pray*. It would seem that Bildad had very little real experience with God; yet Job was being prepared to experience God so closely that he could say, *now my eyes see You* (Job 42:5).

Job Replies: There Is No Arbiter

Job 9:1 (1-2) Yes, I've heard all that before. But how can a human being win a case against God?

Job 9:3 How can anyone argue with him? He can ask a thousand questions that no one could ever answer.

Job 9:4 God is so wise and powerful; no one can stand up against him.

Job 9:5 Without warning he moves mountains and in anger he destroys them.

Job 9:6 God sends earthquakes and shakes the ground; he rocks the pillars that support the earth.

Job 9:7 He can keep the sun from rising, and the stars from shining at night.

Job 9:8 No one helped God spread out the heavens or trample the sea monster's back.

Job 9:9 God hung the stars in the sky—the Dipper, Orion, the Pleiades, and the stars of the south.

Job 9:10 We cannot understand the great things he does, and to his miracles there is no end.

Job 9:11 God passes by, but I cannot see him.

Job 9:12 He takes what he wants, and no one can stop him; no one dares ask him, "What are you doing?"

Job 9:13 God's anger is constant. He crushed his enemies who helped Rahab, the sea monster, oppose him.

Job 9:14 So how can I find words to answer God?

Job 9:15 Though I am innocent, all I can do is beg for mercy from God my judge.

Job 9:16 Yet even then, if he lets me speak, I can't believe he would listen to me.

Job 9:17 He sends storms to batter and bruise me without any reason at all.

Job 9:18 He won't let me catch my breath; he has filled my life with bitterness.

Job 9:19 Should I try force? Try force on God? Should I take him to court? Could anyone make him go?

Job 9:20 I am innocent and faithful, but my words sound guilty, and everything I say seems to condemn me.

Job 9:21 (21-22) I am innocent, but I no longer care. I am sick of living. Nothing matters; innocent or guilty, God will destroy us.

Job 9:23 When an innocent person suddenly dies, God laughs.

Job 9:24 God gave the world to the wicked. He made all the judges blind. And if God didn't do it, who did?

Job 9:25 My days race by, not one of them good.

Job 9:26 My life passes like the swiftest boat, as fast as an eagle swooping down on a rabbit.

Job 9:27 (27-28) If I smile and try to forget my pain, all my suffering comes back to haunt me; I know that God does hold me guilty.

Job 9:29 Since I am held guilty, why should I bother?

Job 9:30 No soap can wash away my sins.

Job 9:31 God throws me into a pit with filth, and even my clothes are ashamed of me.

Job 9:32 If God were human, I could answer him; we could go to court to decide our quarrel.

Job 9:33 But there is no one to step between us—no one to judge both God and me.

Job 9:34 Stop punishing me, God! Keep your terrors away!

Job 9:35 I am not afraid. I am going to talk because I know my own heart.

Job 9:1-35

Job 9 – Job’s Reply to Bildad

A. Job’s frustration with the power and majesty of God.

1. (1-13) Job praises the wisdom and strength of God, though it means that God is beyond his ability to know.

Then Job answered and said:

“Truly I know *it is so*,

But how can a man be righteous before God?

If one wished to contend with Him,

He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.

God *is* wise in heart and mighty in strength.

Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?

He removes the mountains, and they do not know

When He overturns them in His anger;

He shakes the earth out of its place,

And its pillars tremble;

He commands the sun, and it does not rise;

He seals off the stars;

He alone spreads out the heavens,

And treads on the waves of the sea;

He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,

**And the chambers of the south;
He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number.
If He goes by me, I do not see *Him*;
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;
If He takes away, who can hinder Him?
Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'
God will not withdraw His anger,
The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath Him."**

a. **Truly I know it is so:** Job's answer to Bildad seems so much more gracious than the hard words Bildad had for Job in the previous chapter. He began by agreeing with Bildad's general premise: that God rewards the righteous and corrects (or judges) sinners.

b. **But how can a man be righteous before God:** Job's response to Bildad was wisely stated. Job obviously suffered more than normal; yet no one could rightly accuse him of sinning more than normal. If Job was not **righteous before God**, then how could any **man** be?

i. It is important for us to understand that the Bible speaks of human righteousness in two senses.

- A man can be righteous in a *relative* sense, where one can properly be considered as righteous among men as both Noah (Gen 7:1) and Job (Job 1:1) were so considered.

- A man can be righteous in a *forensic* (legal) sense, declared and considered righteous by God through faith (Rom 5:19).

ii. Job's question here concerns the *first* aspect of righteousness, though it is also relevant to the other aspect of righteousness. Job primarily wanted to know, "If I have not been righteous enough to escape the judgment of God, then who can be?"

iii. Yet in the ultimate sense, Job's question is the most important question in the world. How can a man find God's approval? How can a man be considered **righteous** and not *guilty* before God?

c. **If one wished to contend with Him, he could not answer Him one time out of a thousand:** Job understood that man could not debate with God or demand answers from him. Sadly, this will become the basic sin of Job in the story, the sin he repented of in Job 42:1-6.

i. "Here the word *contend* is the technical term for conducting a law-suit." (Andersen)

d. **He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south:** Job praised the great might of God, who created the worlds and put the sun and stars in the sky. Yet the *might* of God was no comfort to Job; it just made him feel that God was more distant than ever.

i. **Chambers of the south:** "The most remote, hidden, and secret parts of the south; so called, because the stars which are under the southern pole are hidden from us, and are enclosed and lodged as in a chamber." (Trapp)

ii. "G. Schiaparelli... notes that as a result of precession many stars that were visible on the southern horizon in Palestine are no longer visible there." (Smick)

e. **Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered:** Job agreed with the basic premise of Bildad, that one is never blessed by hardening one's self against God. Yet Job did not think that this principle applied to himself in this situation, because he knew in his heart that he had not **hardened himself against** God.

f. **He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number:** Job considered the great works of God in the universe, and how they displayed the majesty and power of God. Yet this understanding of the greatness and might of God did not comfort Job; it made him feel that God was too great to either notice (**If He goes by me, I do not see Him**) or care and help Job (**God will not withdraw His anger**).

i. It was as if Job cried out, "Why is God so hard to figure out?" His friends did not think that God was hard to figure out; the problem was *simple* to them. Job had sinned in some bad and unusual way, therefore all this disaster came upon him. Yet Job, knowing not all the truth (as revealed in Job 1-2), but at least knowing his own heart and integrity, knew that God was not so simple to figure out.

g. **The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath Him:** As Mason demonstrates, there are many thoughts in this passage that connect with Jesus.

- We read that God **treads on the waves of the sea**; Jesus walks on the water.
- We read that God **made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades**; a star was made to announce the birth of Jesus.
- We read that God **does great things past finding out, yes wonders without number** and Jesus did uncountable miracles and **great things**.
- We read that God **moves past, and I do not perceive Him**, and Jesus could pass through an angry crowd as if He were invisible (Joh 8:59).
- We read that no one can say to God, "**What are You doing**;" and in the life of Jesus it would come to pass

that no one dared ask Him any more questions (Mar 12:34).

- We read that **God will not withdraw His anger**, so we are not surprised that sometimes Jesus showed anger.

- We read it is said of God, **the allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath him**; and so also evil spirits fell prostrate at the feet of Jesus (Mar 3:11).

- i. "What wonderful irony there is in seeing Job set out to describe the immortal and invisible God, and in the process paint a stunningly accurate portrayal of the earthly Jesus!" (Mason)

- ii. In the very chapter where Job seems to *beg* for Jesus to come in all His offices (Job 9:32-33), he also powerfully and accurately anticipated Jesus coming. (Mason)

2. (14-20) *Job wonders how to answer such a mighty God.*

**"How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words to reason with Him?
For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.
If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.
For He crushes me with a tempest,
And multiplies my wounds without cause.
He will not allow me to catch my breath,
But fills me with bitterness.
If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong;
And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?
Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me;
Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse."**

a. **How then can I answer Him:** Job's problem is clear; he understood that God is righteous and mighty; what he can't understand is how God will use that righteousness or might to help him. God seemed distant and impersonal to Job, and to many who suffer.

b. **He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause:** Job felt that God's might was *against* him, not for him. In this sense, it did no good for Job to consider the awesome power of God, because that power seemed to be set against him.

i. "When Job says he is guiltless, he is not claiming to be sinless. He's not espousing moral perfection. Just relative innocence. He doesn't believe he's done anything to deserve this kind of treatment." (Lawson)

ii. "Job saw God's power as if it were amoral, a sovereign freedom, an uncontrollable power that works mysteriously to do whatever he wills so that no one can stop him and ask, 'What are you doing?'" (Smick)

c. **Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me:** If Job were to proclaim his own righteousness, it would *not be true*. If he were to proclaim his own righteousness, *the words themselves would be evidence of enough pride and arrogance to condemn him*. If he were to proclaim his own righteousness, *he would say that God is wrong about man*.

i. "Years ago, there was, an old man, in Wiltshire, who according to his own statement, was a hundred and three years of age, he had never neglected his parish church, he had brought up eleven children, and had no help from the parish, and he expected that, by-and-by, he should go home to God, for 'he had never done anything wrong in his life that he knowed

about.' 'But,' said someone to him, 'you are a sinner, you know.' 'I know I ain't,' he said. 'Well, but God says that you are.' And what, think you, did that old man reply? He said, 'God may say what he likes, but I know I ain't.' So, you see, he even contradicted God himself, and is not that a great sin for anybody to commit?" (Spurgeon)

ii. Job 9:20 says that if a man justifies himself, his own mouth will condemn him. Rom 8:33-34 tells us that if God justifies a man, then none can condemn him.

d. **Though I were righteous... Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse:** Job gave eloquent voice to his exasperation. He felt as though there was nothing he could do to please God or come into His favor again.

i. "Indeed, the only accusation he will listen to will be one from God Himself. But if God does enter into litigation, then Job is worried that he will not be able to carry out his defence triumphantly." (Andersen)

B. Job longs for a mediator between himself and God

1. (21-24) *He explains his own inability to defend himself before God*

"I am blameless, yet I do not know myself;

I despise my life.

It is all one thing;

Therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'

If the scourge slays suddenly,

He laughs at the plight of the innocent.

The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.

He covers the faces of its judges.

If it is not *He*, who else could it be?"

a. **I am blameless, yet I do not know myself:** Job gave vent to his tortured feelings. He genuinely believed that he was **blameless**, yet at the same time he admitted that he did **not know** himself well enough to have a completely clear conscience.

i. "So the sense is, Though God should give sentence for me, yet I should be so overwhelmed with the dread and terror of the Divine Majesty, that I should be weary of my life." (Poole)

b. **He laughs at the plight of the innocent:** Job felt that not only was God distant and silent, but He was also having sport at the expense of godly sufferers like Job.

i. "As one is startled by a shriek, or saddened by a groan, so these sharp utterances of Job astonish us at first, and then awake our pity... Physical sufferings had produced a strain on Job's mind, and he sought relief by expressing his anguish. Like some solitary prisoner in the gloomy keep of an old castle, he carves on the walls pictures of the abject despondencies which haunt him. His afflictions are aggravated by vain efforts to alleviate them: he wounds his hand with the rough hammer and nail with which he is engraving his griefs. Of such tortures many of us have had a taste." (Spurgeon)

ii. We must remember that all we know so well about Job's situation from Chapters 1 and 2 was completely unknown to Job at this time. He describes the world as how it looks to him. From what Job can see of God, "His outward carriage is the same to both; he neglects the innocent, and seems not to answer their prayers, and suffers them to perish with others, as if he took pleasure in their ruin also." (Poole)

iii. The developing spiritual crisis in Job has to do with his misapprehension of God. Tozer wrote, "The most

important thing about you is what comes into your mind when you think of God.” Job’s conception of God was becoming – quite understandably – twisted by his own experience and imagination. “This God of Job’s imagination was worse than morally indifferent; he even mocked the despair of the innocent and blocked the administering of justice.” (Smick)

c. **If it is not He, who else could it be:** Job’s logic was solid. He understood that his situation could be traced back to God.

i. Clarke on **the earth is given into the hands of the wicked**: “Is it not most evident that the worst men possess most of this world’s goods, and that the righteous are scarcely ever in power or affluence? This was the case in Job’s time; it is the case still. Therefore *prosperity* and *adversity* in this life are no marks either of God’s approbation or disapprobation.”

2. (25-31) *Job’s strong sense of condemnation.*

**“Now my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.
They pass by like swift ships,
Like an eagle swooping on its prey.
If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad face and wear a smile,’
I am afraid of all my sufferings;
I know that You will not hold me innocent.
If I am condemned,
Why then do I labor in vain?
If I wash myself with snow water,
And cleanse my hands with soap,
Yet You will plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes will abhor me.”**

a. **Now my days are swifter than a runner:** Job felt that his life was spinning and running completely out of

control. Time moved fast and was like a hostile predator against him (**like an eagle swooping on its prey**).

i. Job felt that his life was passing by so quickly that his days would be over and God would leave this whole matter unresolved.

ii. "So transitory is our time: redeem it, therefore. It is reported of Ignatius, that when he heard a clock strike, he would say, Here is one hour more now past that I have to answer for." (Trapp)

b. **I know that You will not hold me innocent:** Job felt that he had already been tried and condemned by God, and that it would even do him no good to cleanse himself before God. If he did, he believed that God would just **plunge** him **into the pit** again.

i. "Job's experience told him that sometimes God crushes the innocent for no reason at all. We who are privileged to see the drama from the divine perspective know that Job was innocent and that God did have a cause, a cause beyond the purview of Job, a cause that could not be revealed to Job at the moment." (Smick)

c. **If I wash myself with snow water:** Spurgeon saw the washing with **snow water** as a description of the vain things that sinners do to justify themselves and cleanse themselves of their sin.

- Snow water is hard to get, and therefore considered more precious.
- Snow water has a reputation for purity and is thought therefore to be more able to cleanse.
- Snow water comes down from the heavens and not up from the earth and is thought to be more "spiritual."

i. **Snow water** and **soap** each speak of great effort to be pure. One can use the purest water and the strongest soap, but it is still impossible to cleanse one's sin by one's self.

d. **Yet You will plunge me into the pit:** The more Job considered the greatness of God, the more he felt plunged into a pit of depravity.

i. God may **plunge** a man **into the pit** to see his true sinfulness in many different ways.

- He may bring the memory of old sins to remembrance.
- He may allow the man to be greatly tempted and thus to know his weakness.
- He may reveal to the man how imperfect all his works are.
- He may make the man to understand the spiritual character of the law.
- He may display His great holiness to the man.

ii. "When the Lord, the Holy Spirit, convinces a man of sin, the words of Job are none too strong: '*Mine own clothes shall abhor me.*' You may sometimes have abhorred your clothes because they were so dirty that you were ashamed to be seen in them: but, you must be dirty indeed when your very clothes seem ashamed to hang upon you. This is what the convinced sinner feels — that he is so foul that his very clothes seem to be ashamed of him, as if they would rather have been on anybody else's back than on the back of such a filthy sinner as he is." (Spurgeon)

3. (32-35) *Job longs for a mediator to help.*

***"For He is not a man, as I am,
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court together.
Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.
Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.
Then I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me."***

a. He is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him: Job here keenly felt the distance between himself and God. He felt unjustly treated by God, yet felt there was no way to address the problem. God could not be confronted with Job's unexplained circumstances, so Job despaired of ever finding a satisfactory answer to his problem.

b. Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both: Understanding the distance between himself and God, Job longed for someone to bridge the gap between him and God.

i. Job needed someone to sort out the differences between him and God. His prior belief system did not do that; his experience did not do that; neither did the counsel of his friends. Recognizing this need, Job cried out for **a mediator between** himself and God. "Here, then, was Job crying out for some one who could stand authoritatively between God and himself, and so create a way of meeting, a possibility of contact." (Morgan)

ii. This cry was a good thing. It showed Job looking outside of himself for answers. Yet, "It was grief that brought Job to this place, and grief is the only thing that will; joy does not, neither does prosperity, but grief does." (Chambers)

iii. We have a great promise of a Mediator that Job did not yet know of: *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1Ti 2:5)*. What Job longed for is fulfilled in Jesus. He fulfills all the qualifications for a mediator, someone to stand between two parties in disagreement:

- The mediator must be accepted by both parties.
- The mediator must be allowed to fully settle the case.
- The mediator must be someone able to relate to both parties.
- The mediator must have the desire to see a happy settlement.

iv. Job began this chapter with the language of the law-court (*If one wished to contend with Him, Job 9:3*), and here he ends with the picture of a **mediator** to end a dispute. The end of Job's dispute will not come until later, but the end of *our* dispute with God is available now in Jesus Christ. "But, what is more and more wonderful still, both parties have gained in the suit. Did you ever hear of such a law-suit as this before? No, never in the courts of man." (Spurgeon)

v. **Let Him take His rod away from me:** "As *shebet* signifies, not only *rod*, but also *scepter* or the *ensign of royalty*, Job might here refer to God sitting in his majesty upon the judgment-seat; and this sight so appalled him, that, filled with terror, he was unable to speak." (Clarke)

c. **Then I would speak and not fear Him, but it is not so with me:** Because he lacked a **mediator**, Job felt that he could not speak with God.

i. "I am not free from his terror, and therefore cannot and dare not plead my case boldly with him; and so having nothing else to do but to ease myself by renewing my complaints." (Poole)

Job Continues: A Plea to God

Job 10:1 I am tired of living. Listen to my bitter complaint.

Job 10:2 Don't condemn me, God. Tell me! What is the charge against me?

Job 10:3 Is it right for you to be so cruel? To despise what you yourself have made? And then to smile on the schemes of wicked people?

Job 10:4 Do you see things as we do?

Job 10:5 Is your life as short as ours?

Job 10:6 Then why do you track down all my sins and hunt down every fault I have?

Job 10:7 You know that I am not guilty, that no one can save me from you.

Job 10:8 Your hands formed and shaped me, and now those same hands destroy me.

Job 10:9 Remember that you made me from clay; are you going to crush me back to dust?

Job 10:10 You gave my father strength to beget me; you made me grow in my mother's womb.

Job 10:11 You formed my body with bones and sinews and covered the bones with muscles and skin.

Job 10:12 You have given me life and constant love, and your care has kept me alive.

Job 10:13 But now I know that all that time you were secretly planning to harm me.

Job 10:14 You were watching to see if I would sin, so that you could refuse to forgive me.

Job 10:15 As soon as I sin, I'm in trouble with you, but when I do right, I get no credit. I am miserable and covered with shame.

Job 10:16 If I have any success at all, you hunt me down like a lion; to hurt me you even work miracles.

Job 10:17 You always have some witness against me; your anger toward me grows and grows; you always plan some new attack.

Job 10:18 Why, God, did you let me be born? I should have died before anyone saw me.

Job 10:19 To go from the womb straight to the grave would have been as good as never existing.

Job 10:20 Isn't my life almost over? Leave me alone! Let me enjoy the time I have left.

Job 10:21 I am going soon and will never come back—going to a land that is dark and gloomy,

Job 10:22 a land of darkness, shadows, and confusion, where the light itself is darkness.

Job 10:1-22

Job 10 – What Job Would Say to God

A. What Job would say to God if he could.

1. (1-7) Job would ask God, "Why are You doing this?"

"My soul loathes my life;

I will give free course to my complaint,

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;

Show me why You contend with me.

Does it seem good to You that You should oppress,

That You should despise the work of Your hands,

And smile on the counsel of the wicked?

Do You have eyes of flesh?

Or do You see as man sees?

**Are Your days like the days of a mortal man?
Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,
That You should seek for my iniquity
And search out my sin,
Although You know that I am not wicked,
And *there is* no one who can deliver from Your hand?**

a. **I will give free course to my complaint:** It seems that Job believed that he had not yet begun to complain. He will, **in the bitterness of his soul**, say what he would say to God if given the chance.

i. "Such a poem is called a *complaint*, a moaning appeal to God's compassion. The parallel phrase *the bitterness of my soul* describes misery, but not sourness." (Anderson)

b. **Do not condemn me; show me why You contend with me:** Job would say to God, "Put your cards out on the table. Make your case against me to show why I deserve this disaster in my life."

i. "The meaning of [**do not condemn me**] is literally 'treat a person as wicked.' That was Job's problem with God. It appeared to him that the Almighty was giving him what a wicked man deserved when he knew Job was not a wicked man." (Smick)

ii. "This Job desired to know, not to satisfy his curiosity, but his conscience, as one well observeth." (Trapp)

iii. "It is a remarkable fact, apparently unobserved by commentators, but very revealing of Job's mind, that in none of his petitions does he make the obvious request for his sickness to be cured. As if everything will be all right when he is well again! That would not answer the question which is more urgent than every other concern: 'Why?'" (Anderson)

iv. The tried saint may ask as Job did, “**Show me why You contend with me.**” Spurgeon suggested several answers:

- It may be that God is contending with you to show you His power to uphold you.
- It may be that God is contending with you to develop your graces.
- It may be that God is contending with you because you have some secret sin that is doing you great damage.

- It may be that God is contending with you because He wants you to enter the fellowship of His sufferings.
- It may be that God is contending with you to humble you.

v. The seeking sinner might also ask as Job did, **"Show me why You contend with me."** Spurgeon suggested several answers to the seeking sinner:

- It may be that God is contending with you because you are not yet thoroughly awakened to your lost condition.
- It may be that God is contending with you in order to test your earnestness.
- It may be that God is contending with you because you are harboring one sin that you will not turn over to Him.
- It may be that God is contending with you because you do not yet thoroughly understand the plan of salvation.

vi. Though it was not the case with Job, it is true that God often contends with both saints and sinners to deal with their sin. "Trials often discover sins — sins we should never have found out if it had not been for them. We know that the houses in Russia are very greatly infested with rats and mice. Perhaps a stranger would scarcely notice them at first, but the time when you discover them is when the house is on fire; then they pour out in multitudes. And so doth God sometimes burn up our comforts to make our hidden sins run out; and then he enables us to knock them on the head and get rid of them." (Spurgeon)

c. **Does it seem good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your**

hands: Job vented more and more to God. "Does this make You happy? I am the **work of Your hands**, and look at how You are treating me!"

d. **Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do you see as man sees:** Job clearly knew that God was not limited in His vision as humans are; yet by the facts Job had seen and experienced, it seemed like God saw him with the same shallow and superficial vision that his friends used.

e. **Although You know that I am not wicked:** Job appealed to God's knowledge of Job and his character. Of course, God agreed with Job's self-estimation, even saying that Job *was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1)*.

i. "A sinner I am, but I allow not, wallow not in any known sin; there is no way of wickedness found in me; hypocrisy reigns not in my heart." (Trapp)

ii. Yet Job's present distress twisted his perception of God, to the point where he could not see what could only be seen by the eye of faith that goes beyond the sight of present circumstances.

2. (8-12) *Job would ask, "I am Your creation: Why do You afflict me?"*

**"Your hands have made me and fashioned me,
An intricate unity;
Yet You would destroy me.
Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay.
And will You turn me into dust again?
Did you not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese,
Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews?
You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit."**

a. **Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity:** Job was a smart scientist and knew that God was the author of creation and specifically of mankind. He had the same understanding as the Psalmist who said, *I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well* (Psa 139:14).

i. In mentioning **You have made me like clay** and **will You turn me into dust again**, Job even seemed to understand that mankind came from *the dust of the ground* (Gen 2:7).

ii. In wonderful poetry, Job illustrated the fashioning of his body by three pictures:

- Man is like a vessel of **clay**, shaped by a potter (Job 10:9).
- Man is like a **cheese**, poured out by a cheesemaker (Job 10:10).
- Man is like a garment, woven by a weaver (Job 10:11).

iii. Perhaps the most interesting among these three is the idea of man being like a **cheese**. Some commentators see this as reference to man's humble state: "Man is a very mean thing in his first conception, modestly here set forth by the making of cheeses." (Trapp) Yet other commentators see a reference here to the act of conception: "Thus he modestly and accurately describes God's admirable work in making man out of a small and liquid, and as it were milky, substance, by degrees congealed and condensed into that exquisite frame of man's body." (Poole) In fact, Adam Clarke explained the meaning of Job 10:10 only in Latin because he felt so awkward with the subject matter; after his explanation he

wrote, "I make no apology for leaving this untranslated."

b. **Yet You would destroy me:** Job knew that God created him; now he felt that God wanted to **destroy** him. What Job did not know is that God had strictly forbade this calamity to end in death (Job 2:6). We can sympathize with what Job felt, and we understand that he could not know this; yet we also know the truth from the heavenly scene behind the earthly scene.

i. "In creation first, and now in Job's recent disasters, the might of God is seen. That God Himself did it all is indisputable. Job does not question God's right to do it. But God's reasons for His actions Job cannot detect. Why should He create only to destroy?" (Anderson)

c. **You have granted me life and favor, and Your care has preserved my spirit:** Job could not deny God's past work in his life as creator and as preserver; yet all that made things *more* problematic, not less. The depth of his experience told him, "Why has the same God who created me and preserved me now so obviously abandoned me?"

i. Job 10:8-12 would seem to argue *against* the sometimes Reformed or Calvinistic idea that God created man and – at least for the vast majority of those not elect for salvation – immediately destined these intricately, wonderfully designed and fashioned creatures for eternal damnation. This seems to be a strange and offensive idea to Job, especially considering the care lavished upon these creatures *after* their glorious creation (**You have granted me life and favor, and Your care has preserved my spirit**).

ii. In Job 10:12, Job actually thanked God for three wonderful things:

- Life (**You have granted me life**).
- Divine Favor (**You have granted me... favor**).
- Divine Visitation (**Your care has preserved my spirit**).

B. Job's agonized question: "Why, God?"

1. (13-17) *Job asks God to reveal a sinful cause within Job himself.*

**And these *things* You have hidden in Your heart;
I know that this was with You:
If I sin, then You mark me,
And will not acquit me of my iniquity.
If I am wicked, woe to me;
Even *if* I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head.
I am full of disgrace;
See my misery!
If my head is exalted,
You hunt me like a fierce lion,
**And again You show Yourself awesome against me.
You renew Your witnesses against me,
And increase Your indignation toward me;
Changes and war are *ever* with me.****

a. **These things You have hidden in Your heart; I know that this was with You:** Job begins to touch on the core of the problem that stirred inside of him. He knew that *God* knew all the causes and answers for Job's condition; yet God did not tell Job.

i. Again, because of Job 1, 2, we are in the curious position of *knowing what Job did not know*. The causes and intentions of Job's present calamity were **hidden** in God and were **hidden** to Job, but God has

shared with the *reader* of the Book of Job what Job himself did not know.

ii. It is easy to read the Book of Job *assuming* that Job himself knew what happened in the heavenly realms as recorded in the first two chapters of the book. The reader of the Book of Job must resist this assumption and instead empathize with Job, knowing that it was just as difficult for him to comprehend the workings of the spiritual realm as it is for us.

b. **If I am wicked, woe to me:** Job's friends insisted that the disasters of his life came upon him because of some particular **iniquity** or wickedness within him. Job protested that this was not the case; and here he again states the thought.

i. **I am full of disgrace; see my misery:** "I have abundance of shame in the disappointment of all my hopes, and the continuance and aggravation of my misery, notwithstanding all my prayers to God to remove or mitigate it; and I am confounded within myself, not knowing what to say or do. Let my extremity move thee to pity and help me." (Poole)

c. **You hunt me like a fierce lion, and again You show Yourself awesome against me:** Job felt as though God were no help to him at all in his present distress. Instead, he felt as though he were *prey* for God, who came against him **like a fierce lion**.

i. "As the hunters attack the king of beasts in the forest, so my friends attack me. They assail me on every side." (Clarke)

d. **Changes and war are ever with me:** "It is literally 'changes and a host are with me' (rsv mg.). If the first phrase means 'relieving troops' (Rowley) or 'fresh forces' (neb), then this resembles and illustrates the statement

in verse 16b that God is full of surprises and His resources are limitless.” (Anderson)

i. “I am as if attacked by successive troops; one company being wearied, another succeeds to the attack, so that I am harassed by continual warfare.” (Clarke)

2. (18-22) *Job asks God to leave him alone.*

‘Why then have You brought me out of the womb?

Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me!

I would have been as though I had not been.

I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Are not my days few?

Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort,

Before I go to the place from which I shall not return,

To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,

A land as dark as darkness *itself*,

As the shadow of death, without any order,

Where even the light *is* like darkness.’”

a. **Why then have You brought me out of the womb:** Job here returned to a theme first found in Job 3. He felt that it would be better if he had never been born.

i. It is important to say that Job was *not* suicidal, but his wish that he had never been born is *something like* a wish for suicide. Job felt these almost suicidal thoughts because *he could not see any sense in His suffering*. His friends saw sense (Job suffered because he has sinned, and this is his proper correction), but Job knew they were wrong. We see sense because we know what Job did not know from the first two chapters of the book. Even though Job could not see it, *it was real nonetheless*.

ii. It would have completely changed Job's situation if he could see by faith the invisible, or at least comfort himself in the understanding that there were invisible dynamics in heavenly places that made sense of his situation.

b. **Cease! Leave me alone:** At this point in the story, Job would simply prefer that God would leave him alone. He did not recognize that it was only because God did *not* leave him alone that he had endured this far and was not *completely* destroyed by either the devil or despair.

i. In asking "**Are not my days few ?**" Job reflected on how fast his life seemed to pass. "My life is short, and of itself hastens apace to an end; there is no need that thou shouldst push it forward." (Poole)

ii. "As we read it we feel that the suggestions which Job made about God were entirely wrong: but we remember that they were not wicked, because they were honest." (Morgan)

iii. "Job will not accept anything that contradicts the facts he knows; he is not splenetic, he does not say God is cruel, he simply states the facts – 'It looks as though God is rejecting me without any reason, all the facts go to prove this and I am not going to blink them.'" (Chambers)

c. **To the land of darkness and shadow of death:** The Book of Job well reflects the difficult apprehension of the truth of the afterlife in the Old Testament. Statements of murky, near-despair like this are combined with occasional declarations of triumphant, confident faith (as in Job 19:25, *I know that my Redeemer lives... and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God*).

i. "He piles up a heap of gloomy terms, including four different words for *darkness*, to indicate how dreary Sheol is." (Anderson)

ii. "Finally he resorts to using no less than four different Hebrew words for 'darkness,' translated variously as 'midnight black,' 'the shadow of death,' 'the land of murk and chaos,' 'where confusion reigns,' 'where light itself is like the dead of night,' and so on. Job masses these words together, piling one on top of another for a cumulative effect as solemn and impressive as anything in Shakespeare." (Mason)

iii. "The shadow is the dark part of the thing, so that the shadow of death is the darkest side of death, death in its most hideous and horrid representations; the shadow of death is the substance of death, or death with addition of greatest deadliness." (Trapp)

iv. Adam Clarke tried to explain the futile and frustrated sense in Job and other Old Testament writers: "But *what* is this? And *where*? *Eternity!* How can I form any conception of thee? In thee there is no order, no bounds, no substance, no progression, no change, no past, no present, no future! Thou are an indescribable something, to which there is no analogy in the compass of creation. Thou are infinity and incomprehensibility to all finite beings."

v. This cloudy understanding of the afterlife in the Old Testament does not surprise the reader of the New Testament, who knows that Jesus Christ brought *life and immortality to light* (2Ti 1:10).

vi. "This represented the highest thinking of that age about the future. There were gleams now and again of something more; but they were fitful and uncertain, soon overtaken by dark and sad forebodings... The patriarch called the present life Day

and the future Night. We know that in comparison the present is Night, and the future Day.” (Meyer)

Zophar Speaks: You Deserve Worse

Job 11:1 (1-2) Will no one answer all this nonsense? Does talking so much put you in the right?

Job 11:3 Job, do you think we can't answer you? That your mocking words will leave us speechless?

Job 11:4 You claim that what you say is true; you claim you are pure in the sight of God.

Job 11:5 How I wish God would answer you!

Job 11:6 He would tell you there are many sides to wisdom; there are things too deep for human knowledge. God is punishing you less than you deserve.

Job 11:7 Can you discover the limits and bounds of the greatness and power of God?

Job 11:8 The sky is no limit for God, but it lies beyond your reach. God knows the world of the dead, but you do not know it.

Job 11:9 God's greatness is broader than the earth, wider than the sea.

Job 11:10 If God arrests you and brings you to trial, who is there to stop him?

Job 11:11 God knows which people are worthless; he sees all their evil deeds.

Job 11:12 Stupid people will start being wise when wild donkeys are born tame.

Job 11:13 Put your heart right, Job. Reach out to God.

Job 11:14 Put away evil and wrong from your home.

Job 11:15 Then face the world again, firm and courageous.

Job 11:16 Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more.

Job 11:17 Your life will be brighter than sunshine at noon, and life's darkest hours will shine like the dawn.

Job 11:18 You will live secure and full of hope; God will protect you and give you rest.

Job 11:19 You won't be afraid of your enemies; many people will ask you for help.

Job 11:20 But the wicked will look around in despair and find that there is no way to escape. Their one hope is that death will come.

Job 11:1-20

Job 11 – The First Speech of Zophar

A. Zophar criticizes Job for his complaining.

1. (1-6) Zophar tells Job that he actually deserves far worse from God.

**Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:
“Should not the multitude of words be answered?
And should a man full of talk be vindicated?
Should your empty talk make men hold their peace?
And when you mock, should no one rebuke you?
For you have said,
‘My doctrine *is* pure,
And I am clean in your eyes.’
But oh, that God would speak,
And open His lips against you,
That He would show you the secrets of wisdom!
For *they would* double *your* prudence.
Know therefore that God exacts from you
*Less than your iniquity deserves.”***

a. **Zophar the Naamathite:** This friend of Job’s speaks the least of them all (only here and in Job 20), but perhaps he speaks the most arrogantly and confrontationally to Job. “Zophar was a severe man. Like

Bildad he lacked compassion and was ruthlessly judgmental." (Smick)

i. "He is the most inveterate of Job's accusers, and generally speaks without feeling or pity. In *sour godliness* he excelled all the rest. This chapter and the twentieth comprehends all that he said. He was too crooked to speak much in measured verse." (Clarke)

b. **Should a man full of talk be vindicated:** Zophar had enough of Job's protests to innocence. In his mind, all of Job's eloquent complaining shows him to be nothing more than **a man full of talk**, one who should not **be vindicated**. Therefore, Zophar will continue with a rebuke of Job (**when you mock, should no one rebuke you**).

i. We sense that Job's friends are losing patience with him. In a remarkable display of friendship, they sat with him for seven silent days (Job 2:13). They only spoke in response to Job's agonizing as recorded in Job Chapter 3. Then they tried to help Job see that it *must* be some sin on his part that has prompted this great calamity in his life, but Job refused to see it. The more they insisted, and the more Job stubbornly denied it, the more frustrated they became.

ii. "Clearly the discussion is heating up. It may be in Zophar's nature to be caustic and abrupt, or it may just be that things have reached such an impasse that all the friends are now prepared to level direct accusations at Job." (Mason)

iii. "Job's bewilderment and his outbursts are natural; in them we find his humanity, and our own. Zophar detaches the words from the man, and hears them only as *babble* and mockery." (Andersen)

c. **For you have said, “My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes”:** Zophar did not truthfully represent Job’s words here. Job did not claim to be **pure** and **clean**, as if he were sinless and perfect; but in fairness to Zophar, we must say that Job claimed to be in the right, and this was virtually a claim to be **pure** and **clean** in this matter.

i. Job knew there was no special or specific sin on his part behind the loss of his children, his health, his servants, and his material wealth (Job 7:20). Even so, Job knew that he was a sinner in a general sense and could not be considered righteous compared to God.

- *Therefore my words have been rash (Job 6:3).*
- *Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity (Job 7:21).*
- *How can a man be righteous before God (Job 9:2).*
- *Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse (Job 19:20).*
- *I know that You will not hold me innocent (Job 9:28).*

ii. Therefore, we understand Job’s claims to be *blameless* (Job 9:21-22) to refer to the fact that there was indeed no special or particular sin on his part that prompted his great suffering. Indeed, even God recognized Job as blameless in this sense (Job 1:1; Job 1:8; Job 2:3).

d. **Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves:** In the thinking of Zophar, not only was Job wrong to claim to be either **pure** or **clean**, he was *actually so guilty before God to deserve far worse than he had suffered.*

i. Zophar here sounds like a man who has carefully studied a particular theological idea (especially in Reformed Theology) known as *total depravity*. In this idea, the sinfulness of man – both inherited from Adam and actually practiced by the individual – is so great that one could say regarding *every* suffering of life, **“know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves.”**

ii. Bradley captures the idea of Zophar: “‘So far from being unjust and cruel, God has spared thee the full measure of thy desserts.’ He puts forward, that is, for the first time in its naked force, the full and logical conclusion of the creed which he and his friends held as an essential tenet of their faith.”

iii. Unfortunately, Zophar is among the *miserable comforters* (Job 16:2) who were actually quite wrong in their analysis and advice (Job 42:7). Whatever the merits of the theological idea of total depravity, it *did not* speak to Job’s circumstance at all.

2. (7-12) Zophar teaches Job theology.

**“Can you search out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?
They are higher than heaven; what can you do?
Deeper than Sheol; what can you know?
Their measure *is* longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.”**

**“If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers *to judgment*,
Then who can hinder Him?
For He knows deceitful men;
He sees wickedness also.
Will He not then consider *it*?
For an empty-headed man will be wise,
When a wild donkey’s colt is born a man.”**

a. **Can you search out the deep things of God:** After instructing Job in the doctrine of total depravity, Zophar went on to teach Job about the transcendence of God. Therefore, in Zophar's thinking, Job was wrong to question God.

b. **Who can hinder him:** The next lesson in Zophar's theology was the *sovereignty* of God. Zophar believed that the best thing Job could do was to *accept* his punishment from God instead of protesting the injustice of it. In Zophar's mind, Job's punishment was just, and God was actually giving Job less than he deserved.

c. **He knows deceitful men; he sees wickedness also. Will He not then consider it:** Zophar here implied that what Job wanted was for God to turn His head aside from justice. Zophar wanted Job to know that it was wrong – and wicked – to wish that God would not **consider** the deceit and wickedness of man; in this case, Job's deceit and wickedness.

d. **For an empty-headed man will be wise, when a wild donkey's colt is born a man:** Here, Zophar simply called Job *stupid*. He associated him with the **empty-headed man**, who will be wise as soon as wild donkeys start giving birth to human beings.

i. "The sharpness of his sarcasm is demonstrated in Job 11:12. Zophar labeled Job a witless, empty-headed man with as much chance to become wise as a wild donkey has to be born tame." (Smick)

ii. For Zophar – as with others who share his basic theological perspective – there was no mystery in Job's situation at all. God was sovereign, God was just, Job was a sinner, and therefore he should be thankful that he wasn't worse off.

iii. Bradley captures the idea of Zophar well: "Wherever there is suffering, there is sin, real and tangible sin, proportioned to that suffering. God governs the world by rewards and punishments, and those rewards and punishments are distributed here below with an unerring justice. It follows therefore that this Job, this seeming Saint, is really a man full of heinous sin."

B. Zophar's advice to Job.

1. (13-19) *Zophar calls upon Job to repent.*

**"If you would prepare your heart,
And stretch out your hands toward Him;
If iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away,
And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
Then surely you could lift up your face without spot;
Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear;
Because you would forget *your* misery,
And remember *it* as waters *that have* passed away,
And *your* life would be brighter than noonday.
Though you were dark, you would be like the morning.
And you would be secure, because there is hope;
Yes, you would dig *around you*, and take your rest in safety.
You would also lie down, and no one would make *you* afraid;
Yes, many would court your favor."**

a. **If iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away:** Given Zophar's theological understanding of Job's situation, the answer is easy. Job should simply repent and seek the mercy and goodness of God.

i. Trapp on **stretch out your hands toward Him:** "Hebrew, And spread thy palms to him: so in prayer for pardon of sin and power against sin; for this

prayer-gesture, wherein God's people come for mercy, as beggars do for alms; or as they beg quarter for their lives with hands held up; or, lastly, as he that is fallen into a ditch, or deep pit, and cannot get out, lifteth up his hands and crieth out for help."

b. Because you would forget your misery, and remember it as waters that have passed away: This is what Job longed for; to be so restored and blessed again that he would forget all this ever happened to him. Zophar said – falsely – that this could be Job's portion if he would only repent of the great sins that brought this disaster upon him.

i. Though Zophar was wrong in understanding the cause, he did know what the cure would look like – to be able to **forget your misery, and remember it as the waters that have passed away.**

ii. "We seem to lie all broken in pieces, with our thoughts like a case of knives cutting into our spirit; and we say to ourselves, 'We never shall forget this terrible experience.' And yet, by-and-by, God turns towards us the palm of his hand, and we see that it is full of mercy, we are restored to health, or uplifted from depression of spirit, and we wonder that we ever made so much of our former suffering or depression." (Spurgeon)

iii. "We remember it no more, except as a thing that has passed and gone, to be recollected with gratitude that we have been delivered from it, but not to be remembered so as to leave any scar upon our spirit, or to cause us any painful reflection whatsoever. 'Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.'" (Spurgeon)

c. Your life would be brighter than noonday... no one would make you afraid; yes, many would court

your favor: Zophar encouraged Job to confess and repent of his sin by showing him how God would bless and honor him, restoring him to a bright, confident, admired life once again.

2. (20) *Zophar warns and rebukes Job.*

**“But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And they shall not escape,
And their hope; loss of life!”**

a. **The eyes of the wicked will fail, and they shall not escape:** Zophar here encouraged Job to confess and repent by warning him of the consequences if he did not. Surely, he would **not escape** a greater display of God’s displeasure.

b. **Their hope; loss of life:** Zophar here rebuked Job’s prior frustrated preference for death instead of his present miserable state (Job 3:16-17; Job 6:8-9). He associated Job with the **wicked** whose **eyes** shall **fail** and who **shall not escape**.

i. There is indeed much to admire in the theology and philosophy of Zophar and Job’s friends. They say much that is generally true and valuable, and it is – in general – backed by the wisdom of the ancients. They believed in God’s power and His absolute righteousness. They also believed that God would forgive a sinner and take him back into favor if the sinner responded correctly to the punishment God appointed.

ii. Nevertheless, the application of this creed – these deeply held beliefs about how life and God and the universe work – was *completely wrong* in Job’s situation. The reasons for his calamity were completely out of the conception of Job’s friends,

though they were confident that they understood the situation completely.

iii. "They misapplied the most precious truths and the most edifying of doctrines; turned wholesome food to poison; pressed upon their friend those half-truths, which are sometimes the worst of untruths."
(Bradley)

Job Replies: The Lord Has Done This

Job 12:1 (1-2) Yes, you are the voice of the people. When you die, wisdom will die with you.

Job 12:3 But I have as much sense as you have; I am in no way inferior to you; everyone knows all that you have said.

Job 12:4 Even my friends laugh at me now; they laugh, although I am righteous and blameless; but there was a time when God answered my prayers.

Job 12:5 You have no troubles, and yet you make fun of me; you hit someone who is about to fall.

Job 12:6 But thieves and godless people live in peace, though their only god is their own strength.

Job 12:7 Even birds and animals have much they could teach you;

Job 12:8 ask the creatures of earth and sea for their wisdom.

Job 12:9 All of them know that the LORD's hand made them.

Job 12:10 It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power.

Job 12:11 But just as your tongue enjoys tasting food, your ears enjoy hearing words.

Job 12:12 (12-13) Old people have wisdom, but God has wisdom and power. Old people have insight; God has insight and power to act.

Job 12:14 When God tears down, who can rebuild, and who can free those God imprisons?

Job 12:15 Drought comes when God withholds rain; floods come when he turns water loose.

Job 12:16 God is strong and always victorious; both deceived and deceiver are in his power.

Job 12:17 He takes away the wisdom of rulers and makes leaders act like fools.

Job 12:18 He dethrones kings and makes them prisoners;

Job 12:19 he humbles priests and men of power.

Job 12:20 He silences those who are trusted, and takes the wisdom of old people away.

Job 12:21 He disgraces those in power and puts an end to the strength of rulers.

Job 12:22 He sends light to places dark as death.

Job 12:23 He makes nations strong and great, but then he defeats and destroys them.

Job 12:24 He makes their leaders foolish and lets them wander confused and lost;

Job 12:25 they grope in the dark and stagger like drunkards.

Job 12:1-25

Job 12 – Job’s Sarcastic Reply

A. Job complains about his friends.

1. (1-3) Job sarcastically answers Zophar and his other friends.

Then Job answered and said:

“No doubt you *are* the people,

And wisdom will die with you!

But I have understanding as well as you;

I am not inferior to you.

Indeed, who does not *know* such things as these?"

a. **No doubt you are the people:** It is easy to hear the sarcastic and bitter tone of voice in Job. That tone was appropriately taken, because Job's friends really had acted as if they were **the people** and if they had all **wisdom**.

b. **I have understanding as well as you... Indeed, who does not know such things as these:** In rebuke to Zophar and his friends, Job made two points. First, that he also was a man of **understanding**. Second, that the theological principles presented by Zophar and the others were really widely known.

i. "All your boasted wisdom consists only in *strings of proverbs* which are in every person's mouth, and are no proof of wisdom and experience in them that use them." (Clarke)

ii. In response, Job will speak plainly about the wisdom and greatness of God. "I would we had another Job, to chastise the high-sounding language of modern theologians. There are starting up in our midst men, who if they are not heretics in doctrine, are aliens in speech." (Spurgeon)

2. (4-6) *Job's complaint: "My friends mock and misunderstand me."*

**"I am one mocked by his friends,
Who called on God, and He answered him,
The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed.
A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease;
It is made ready for those whose feet slip.
The tents of robbers prosper,**

**And those who provoke God are secure;
In what God provides by His hand."**

a. **I am one mocked by his friends:** Job complained that even though he was a godly man (one **who called on God, and He answered**), a man who was **just and blameless**, even so he was **mocked** and **ridiculed**.

i. The way that innocent Job was mocked by others reminds us of what Jesus endured in His sufferings and on the cross, when He was mocked by the soldiers who beat Him (Mat 27:29), was mocked by the chief priests as He hung on the cross (Mat 27:41), and was ridiculed by others (Mar 15:27-31).

b. **A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease:** Job remembers what his life used to be like. He used to call on God and receive an answer, and in those bright days he didn't feel like he needed **a lamp**, because his life was **at ease**. Now, it is all different and his friends only mock and misunderstand him.

c. **Those who provoke God are secure:** Now, it seemed to Job that his life and prior understanding was upside-down. Before, everything seemed to make sense – the righteous seemed to be blessed and the wicked seemed to be afflicted. Now, it is all different.

i. Job did not give up on God, but he had to give up on his *prior understanding of God*. "Job's creed has crumbled into ruins, 'therefore', he says, 'I leave my creed, but I deny that I have left God.'" (Chambers)

B. Job explains his understanding of God's ways.

1. (7-12) *All creation knows the power of God.*

**"But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;**

**And the fish of the sea will explain to you.
Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
In whose hand *is* the life of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?
Does not the ear test words
And the mouth taste its food?
Wisdom *is* with aged men,
And with length of days, understanding."**

a. **Now ask the beasts, and they will teach you:** Job here expands on the idea first made in Job 9:3 : *Indeed, who does not know such things as these?* The point is that what his friends say about God is so elementary that even the animals know it.

i. "If you want to know the ways of the Lord, says Job, just look around you. You can theologize all you want, but if your theories do not mesh with the nature of things as they are, then what good are such theories? Even a dog has more knowledge of God than you do!" (Mason)

ii. **That the hand of the LORD has done this:** "It is always pointed out that verse 9 is the only place in the poetry where the name Yahweh is used for God. For this reason its authenticity has been doubted by many. Its removal in the interests of a theory that this word distinguishes a prose original from poetic additions is a circle of reasoning. Viewed in a different light, the word acquired enormous importance because its rarity makes it so conspicuous." (Andersen)

b. **Does not the ear test words:** In these few verses, Job recites several truisms; statements that are understood as obviously true. The idea is that as clearly

as these things are true, so is the power and majesty of God also easily understood as true.

i. "There is no appeal from the verdict of our palate. We know in a moment whether a substance is sweet or bitter, palatable or disagreeable. Now what the taste is to articles of diet, that the ear is to words, whether of God or man." (Meyer)

2. (13-25) *Job describes the great power of God.*

**"With Him *are* wisdom and strength,
He has counsel and understanding.
If He breaks *a thing* down, it cannot be rebuilt;
If He imprisons a man, there can be no release.
If He withholds the waters, they dry up;
If He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.
With Him *are* strength and prudence.
The deceived and the deceiver *are* His.
He leads counselors away plundered,
And makes fools of the judges.
He loosens the bonds of kings,
And binds their waist with a belt.
He leads princes away plundered,
And overthrows the mighty.
He deprives the trusted ones of speech,
And takes away the discernment of the elders.
He pours contempt on princes,
And disarms the mighty.
He uncovers deep things out of darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to light.
He makes nations great, and destroys them;
He enlarges nations, and guides them.
He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the
people of the earth,
And makes them wander in a pathless wilderness.**

**They grope in the dark without light,
And He makes them stagger like a drunken *man*."**

a. **With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding:** In this section, Job rebuked the previous speech of Zophar (Job 11), especially where Zophar criticized Job for not knowing God and likened him to an empty-headed man (Job 11:7-12). Here, Job showed that he did indeed know that God was great in **wisdom and strength**, and that He was mighty in **counsel and understanding**.

i. Job's message to his friends was clear: "I do know God and how great He is. Don't criticize me on this point any longer."

b. **If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt:** With wonderful poetic beauty and repetition, Job described the power and majesty of God.

- He showed God's power over material things (**If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt**). "He alone can *create*, and he alone can *destroy*. Nothing can be annihilated but by the same Power that created it. This is a most remarkable fact. No power, skill, or cunning of man can annihilate the smallest particle of matter. Man, by chemical agency, may change its *form*; but to reduce it to *nothing* belongs to God alone." (Clarke)

- He showed God's power over men (**If He imprisons a man**).

- He showed God's power over minds (**The deceived and the deceiver are His**).

- He showed God's power over the wise (**He leads counselors away plundered, and makes fools of the judges**).

- He showed God's power over rulers (**He loosens the bonds of kings... He leads princes away**

plundered).

- He showed God's power over the eloquent (**He deprives the trusted ones of speech**).
- He showed God's power over the darkness (**brings the shadow of death to light**).
- He showed God's power over the nations (**He makes nations great, and destroys them**).

i. "This may be a mockery of the lopsidedness of Eliphaz's creedal hymn in Job 5:18-26, where everything good happens to the righteous. It is hardly a parody on God's wisdom since in the introduction to the poem (Job 12:13) Job ascribed wisdom to God in conjunction with his purpose and understanding." (Smick)

ii. **Disarms the mighty** is more literally in the Hebrew, *loosens the belt of the mighty*. "Which is the idiom for depriving of strength, because it disables the wearer for the contest by letting the garments fly loose, and thus hindering the necessary movement for the putting forth of strength." (Bullinger)

c. He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth: Here, Job extended his description of the power of God to the idea of God's ability to take **away the understanding** of even great men. When He does this, **they grope in the dark without light**.

i. This shows how easy it is for God to make men **wander in the pathless wilderness** or **stagger like a drunken man**. All He must do is merely **take away understanding**, showing that the wisdom and **understanding** of man is *dependent* upon God.

ii. We sense that Job actually described himself, as this prominent man without **understanding**, a man

wandering **in a pathless wilderness**, a man groping **in the dark without light**, and who staggered **like a drunken man**.

Job Continues: Still I Will Hope in God

Job 13:1 (1-2) Everything you say, I have heard before. I understand it all; I know as much as you do. I'm not your inferior.

Job 13:3 But my dispute is with God, not you; I want to argue my case with him.

Job 13:4 You cover up your ignorance with lies; you are like doctors who can't heal anyone.

Job 13:5 Say nothing, and someone may think you are wise!

Job 13:6 Listen while I state my case.

Job 13:7 Why are you lying? Do you think your lies will benefit God?

Job 13:8 Are you trying to defend him? Are you going to argue his case in court?

Job 13:9 If God looks at you closely, will he find anything good? Do you think you can fool God the way you fool others?

Job 13:10 Even though your prejudice is hidden, he will reprimand you,

Job 13:11 and his power will fill you with terror.

Job 13:12 Your proverbs are as useless as ashes; your arguments are as weak as clay.

Job 13:13 Be quiet and give me a chance to speak, and let the results be what they will.

Job 13:14 I am ready to risk my life.

Job 13:15 I've lost all hope, so what if God kills me? I am going to state my case to him.

Job 13:16 It may even be that my boldness will save me, since no wicked person would dare to face God.

Job 13:17 Now listen to my words of explanation.

Job 13:18 I am ready to state my case, because I know I am in the right.

Job 13:19 Are you coming to accuse me, God? If you do, I am ready to be silent and die.

Job 13:20 Let me ask for two things; agree to them, and I will not try to hide from you:

Job 13:21 stop punishing me, and don't crush me with terror.

Job 13:22 Speak first, O God, and I will answer. Or let me speak, and you answer me.

Job 13:23 What are my sins? What wrongs have I done? What crimes am I charged with?

Job 13:24 Why do you avoid me? Why do you treat me like an enemy?

Job 13:25 Are you trying to frighten me? I'm nothing but a leaf; you are attacking a piece of dry straw.

Job 13:26 You bring bitter charges against me, even for what I did when I was young.

Job 13:27 You bind chains on my feet; you watch every step I take, and even examine my footprints.

Job 13:28 As a result, I crumble like rotten wood, like a moth-eaten coat.

Job 13:1-28

Job 13 – Job Challenges His Critics

A. Job's challenge to his critics.

1. (1-12) Job's strong rebuke to his friends.

**"Behold, my eye has seen all *this*,
My ear has heard and understood it.**

**What you know, I also know;
I *am* not inferior to you.
But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
But you forgers of lies,
You *are* all worthless physicians.
Oh, that you would be silent,
And it would be your wisdom!
Now hear my reasoning,
And heed the pleadings of my lips.
Will you speak wickedly for God,
And talk deceitfully for Him?
Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
Will it be well when He searches you out?
Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man?
He will surely rebuke you
If you secretly show partiality.
Will not His excellence make you afraid,
And the dread of Him fall upon you?
Your platitudes *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay."**

a. **Behold, my eye has seen all this... What you know, I also know:** Job here complained against the claim of superior knowledge on the part of his friends. To them – especially perhaps to Zophar – the situation seemed so simple; therefore, Job must be somewhat ignorant to see what they believed was so easy to see.

b. **I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God:** Job here developed a theme that would end with a virtual demand that God make sense of his suffering. God's response to Job's demand (and Job's response to God's response) makes up the last few chapters of the book.

i. We sense the deep frustration in Job that prompted this plea, “**I desire to reason with God.**” It was bad enough when he could make no sense of his situation, but it was worse when his friends persistently insisted on their own *wrong* answer to Job’s crisis. As much as anything, it was their insistence that prompted Job to demand an answer (and vindication with it) from God.

c. **You forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians:** The same devastating frustration that led Job to wish he were dead, now leads him in bitter response to his friends’ accusations.

i. We can sympathize with Job’s situation and turmoil, all the while recognizing that we are called to a better standard than Job: *Repay no one evil for evil* (Rom 12:17; see also 1Pe 2:21-23).

d. **Will you speak wickedly for God... Will you contend for God:** Job’s friends were very confident in their ability to speak for God, but since what they said was not true, they actually misrepresented Him. They acted like lawyers on God’s behalf, but since they did not truly represent Him, Job could rightly ask: “**Will it be well when He searches you out?**”

i. “Job warned them about lying even while they uttered beautiful words in defense of God. If they were going to plead God’s case, they had better do it honestly. God would judge them for their deceit even if they used it in his behalf (Job 13:8-9).” (Smick)

e. **He will surely rebuke you if you secretly show partiality:** The **partiality** Job’s friends showed was toward *themselves*. Job knew they would never want to be treated the way they were treating Job.

f. **Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes:** The friends of Job claimed to know wisdom and speak wisely; Job

dismissed their supposed guidance as mere **platitudes**. Their wisdom had no substance, no use, and left Job feeling burned-over – truly, **proverbs of ashes**.

i. “The idea is that men may argue in defence of God upon false lines, through limited knowledge. That is exactly what these men had been doing. The result was that they were unjust to Job. They did not know it: they did not intend that it should be so. But it was so.” (Morgan)

2. (13-19) *Job’s confidence in God and his own integrity.*

**“Hold your peace with me, and let me speak,
Then let come on me what *may*!
Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in my hands?
Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.
Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.
He also *shall* be my salvation,
For a hypocrite could not come before Him.
Listen carefully to my speech,
And to my declaration with your ears.
See now, I have prepared *my* case,
I know that I shall be vindicated.
Who *is* he *who* will contend with me?
If now I hold my tongue, I perish.”**

a. **Hold your peace with me, and let me speak:** Perhaps at this point Job’s friends tried to interrupt him, or said their own words of protest. Job demanded the right to finish his statement.

b. **Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him:** *This* is the attitude that will see Job through his past and present crises. He did not understand any of his situation and felt that God was against him, not for him (as in Job 9:28; Job 10:16-17). At the same time, he could still exclaim: **yet will I trust Him.**

i. "I have no dependence but God; I trust him alone. Should he even destroy my life by this affliction, yet will I hope that when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Clarke)

ii. Writing fictionally in the voice of a senior demon instructing a junior demon in his popular book *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis stated – from a demon's perspective – this dynamic of trial in the life of the believer: "He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with their stumbles. Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

iii. "It is well worthy of observation that in these words Job answered both the accusations of Satan and the charges of his friends. Though I do not know that Job was aware that the devil had said, 'Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not set a hedge about him and all that he hath?' Yet he answered that base suggestion in the ablest possible manner, for he did in effect say, 'Though God should pull down my hedge, and lay me bare as the wilderness itself, yet will I cling to him in firmest faith.'" (Spurgeon)

iv. "There are three things in the text: *a terrible supposition* — "though he slay me"; *a noble resolution*, "yet will I trust in him"; and, thirdly, *a secret appropriateness*. This last will require a little looking into, but I hope to make it clear that there is a great appropriateness in our trusting while God is

slaying us — the two things go well together, though it may not so appear.” (Spurgeon)

v. Charles Spurgeon listed several reasons why he thought that “slaying times” were good times.

- Such times show us that we are really His sons and daughters because He only chastens His children.
- Such times – slaying times – are when real faith is created.
- Such times are when God tests and affirms our faith.
- Such times are when we can grow in faith.
- Such times allow the child of God to prove that he is not a mercenary professor of faith.

vi. “Once more, *the grim supposition of the text, if ever it was realized by anybody it was realized by our Lord Jesus*. Our great covenant Head knows to the full what his members suffer. God did slay him, and glory be to his blessed name, he trusted God while he was being slain.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him... I know that I shall be vindicated:** Before his crisis, Job believed himself to be a *blameless and upright* man, as indeed he was (Job 1:1; Job 1:8). He steadfastly clung to this belief throughout all his experience of calamity, and through all the protests and arguments of his friends. Even **before** God, he would **defend** his **own ways**, not in arrogance, but in determined connection with reality.

i. In this, Job is a remarkable example of a man who will not forfeit what he knows to be true in the midst of the storm. This is actually an area of great difficulty; because such storms are undeniably helpful

in shaking us from *wrong* beliefs. Some who have felt they had Job's determination to hold on to the truth, actually merely were sinfully stubborn. Yet Job did not question the concept of truth or his ability to know it; he knew that God Himself would agree that Job's disaster did not come upon him because of special or severe sin; he knew God Himself would agree that Job was a *blameless and upright man* (Job 1:1; Job 1:8).

d. **If now I hold my tongue, I perish:** In one sense, it seems that Job felt that this determined connection to truth and reality was *all he had*. He had lost everything, including his sense of spiritual well-being. All he had was the truth, and he felt that if he let go of that to simply stop the argument or to please his friends, he would **perish**.

B. Job's appeal to God.

1. (20-27) *Job asks God to tell him if sin is indeed the cause of his suffering.*

**"Only two *things* do not do to me,
Then I will not hide myself from You:
Withdraw Your hand far from me,
And let not the dread of You make me afraid.
Then call, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, then You respond to me.
How many *are* my iniquities and sins?
Make me know my transgression and my sin.
Why do You hide Your face,
And regard me as Your enemy?
Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?
And will You pursue dry stubble?
For You write bitter things against me,
And make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
You put my feet in the stocks,**

**And watch closely all my paths.
You set a limit for the soles of my feet."**

a. **Do not... Withdraw Your hand far from me:** Earlier, Job had told God that he just wanted to be left alone (Job 7:16). Now he shows that this previous feeling was just a feeling, and that really, he *did not want* God to **withdraw** His **hand far from** him.

i. This shows that, at least in a small sense, Job understood that God's hand was sustaining him in the midst of this great trial. We understand his *feeling* of abandonment; yet Job can grudgingly admit that God's hand has been with him in the fire of affliction.

ii. **Then I will not hide myself from You:** "Job has never hidden from God and has no intention of doing so. On the contrary, it is the hiddenness of God that is horrifying him. Cain's identical words in

Gen 4:14 describe his expulsion by God from His company. This is what Job thinks has happened to him (Job 13:24 – clearly God's act), and he can neither understand nor endure it." (Andersen)

b. **Let not the dread of You make me afraid:** Here, we sense the value that Job placed upon his personal connection with God, and worried that this present season would destroy it. Job wanted restored communication with God (**Then call, and I will answer**).

i. The fear Job was concerned about was not the good and proper *fear of God*; instead, this was prompted by **dread**. The wrong kind of fear of God is afraid that God will hurt us; the right kind is afraid that we will hurt God.

c. **Make me know my transgression and my sin:** Job has steadfastly held to his own innocence, in the sense

that there was no special or severe sin that prompted his recent cataclysm of suffering, and despite the eloquent pleas of his friends. At the same time, he will allow for the possibility that he is wrong. Therefore, he prayed this wonderful prayer, asking God to show him his **iniquities and sins**.

i. Job's words here catch the attitude of the later Psalmist: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* (Psa 139:23-24).

d. **Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy:** Again, we sense Job's agony. He longed for restored communication and communion with God but *felt* as though God was hiding from him and regarded him as an **enemy**.

i. "If God would only stop tormenting him and communicate, Job felt all would end well." (Smick)

e. **Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro:** "It is a common figure he uses, that of a leaf driven to and fro. Strong gusts of wind, it may be in the autumn when the leaves hang but lightly upon the trees, send them falling in showers around us; quite helpless to stay their own course, fluttering in the air to and fro, like winged birds that cannot steer themselves, but are guided by every fitful blast that blows upon them, at last they sink into the mire, to be trodden down and forgotten. To them Job likens himself-a helpless, hopeless, worthless, weak, despised, perishing thing." (Spurgeon)

i. "O my brethren, what a great blessing it is to be made to know our own weakness. To empty the sinner of his folly, his vanity and conceit is no easy matter. Christ can easily fill him with wisdom and

prudence, but to get him empty-this is the work; this is the difficulty." (Spurgeon)

f. **You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth:** This is another example of the truth that Job did not believe himself to be without sin. Instead, he recognized the **iniquities of my youth** and feared that God was now charging these sins against him.

i. **For You write bitter things against me:** "The suggestion has been made that God is a doctor, writing a prescription for bitter medicine; or a judge, prescribing bitter punishment; or recording Job's bitter crimes... The writing is the decree allocating *bitter things* to Job."

g. **You put my feet in the stocks:** Because he felt that God was *against* him, Job felt completely hindered and fenced-in by God. He felt as if his feet were limited and his paths were closely watched.

h. **You set a limit for the soles of my feet:** This is literally, *You inscribe a print on my feet*. Bullinger translates, "Making Thy mark upon my very feet, and comments: "As owners of cattle and camels, etc., put their mark upon the hoof, so that it may be known and traced."

2. (28) *Job laments the frailty of man.*

**"Man decays like a rotten thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten."**

a. **Man decays like a rotten thing:** Job's eloquent meditation on the greatness of God (especially in Job 12, earlier in this same speech) certainly elevated God; but it also made man, by comparison, seem **like a rotten thing**.

i. Job essentially agreed with Zophar's understanding of the depravity of man (Job 11:5-6); his disagreement was with Zophar's application of that doctrine to Job's circumstance.

b. **Like a garment that is moth-eaten:** Job's statement was more than a poetic description of the depravity of man in general; it was a discouraged sigh over his own condition. *Job* was the one decaying **like a rotten thing**; *Job* was like **a garment that is moth-eaten**. Zophar could talk about it; Job was *living it*.

Job Continues: Death Comes Soon to All

Job 14:1 We are all born weak and helpless. All lead the same short, troubled life.

Job 14:2 We grow and wither as quickly as flowers; we disappear like shadows.

Job 14:3 Will you even look at me, God, or put me on trial and judge me?

Job 14:4 Nothing clean can ever come from anything as unclean as human beings.

Job 14:5 The length of our lives is decided beforehand—the number of months we will live. You have settled it, and it can't be changed.

Job 14:6 Look away from us and leave us alone; let us enjoy our hard life—if we can.

Job 14:7 There is hope for a tree that has been cut down; it can come back to life and sprout.

Job 14:8 Even though its roots grow old, and its stump dies in the ground,

Job 14:9 with water it will sprout like a young plant.

Job 14:10 But we die, and that is the end of us; we die, and where are we then?

Job 14:11 Like rivers that stop running, and lakes that go dry,

Job 14:12 people die, never to rise. They will never wake up while the sky endures; they will never stir from their sleep.

Job 14:13 I wish you would hide me in the world of the dead; let me be hidden until your anger is over, and then set a time to remember me.

Job 14:14 If a man dies, can he come back to life? But I will wait for better times, wait till this time of trouble is ended.

Job 14:15 Then you will call, and I will answer, and you will be pleased with me, your creature.

Job 14:16 Then you will watch every step I take, but you will not keep track of my sins.

Job 14:17 You will forgive them and put them away; you will wipe out all the wrongs I have done.

Job 14:18 There comes a time when mountains fall and solid cliffs are moved away.

Job 14:19 Water will wear down rocks, and heavy rain will wash away the soil; so you destroy our hope for life.

Job 14:20 You overpower us and send us away forever; our faces are twisted in death.

Job 14:21 Our children win honor, but we never know it, nor are we told when they are disgraced.

Job 14:22 We feel only the pain of our own bodies and the grief of our own minds.

Job 14:1-22

Job 14 – Job Considers the Grave and the Afterlife

A. Frail man and a mighty God.

1. (1-2) Job muses on the frailty of man.

**“Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.**

**He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue."**

a. **Few of days and full of trouble:** Having mentioned the idea of the frailty of men in general and his own frailty in particular, Job here expands on the idea. He considers that the days of man on this earth are short and often **full of trouble**.

b. **He flees like a shadow and does not continue:** Considering the life of man – fleeting and frail – Job also speculated on what happened to man after this fading, shadow-like life; considering that perhaps it **does not continue**.

i. "Job was not giving a general polemic against resurrection. On the contrary, he was saying that if God wanted to, he could hide Job in Sheol till his anger passed and then raise him (Job 14:13)."
(Smick)

2. (3-6) *Job's prayer: "Consider how frail man is and have mercy on him."*

**"And do You open Your eyes on such a one,
And bring me to judgment with Yourself?
Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? No one!**

**Since his days *are* determined,
The number of his months *is* with You;
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.
Look away from him that he may rest,
Till like a hired man he finishes his day."**

a. **Do You open Your eyes on such a one:** Job here applied his previous thoughts on the fleeting and frail nature of humanity to prayer over *his own* situation. "God, You see that I am the rotting one; the moth-eaten

garment; the fading flower and the fleeing shadow. Look upon me in mercy!"

b. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

No one: Job despairs that perhaps God demands something of him that he is unable to be or do. If God demands perfect cleanness before He will relieve Job's affliction, then Job knew he could never meet that standard.

i. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean:

"I do not say, *I am clean*, as Zophar pretendeth; but confess that I am a very *unclean* creature, and therefore liable to thy justice, if thou wilt deal rigorously with me; but remember that this is not my peculiar case, but the common lot of every man."
(Poole)

c. You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. Look away from him that he may rest: Job continued to paint the picture of God fencing man in, restricting his movements. Under such an idea, it would be better if God would just **look away** so the afflicted one could **rest**.

B. Job's meditation of what lies beyond this life.

1. (7-12) Job considers the idea that man does not live beyond the grave.

**"For there is hope for a tree,
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender shoots will not cease.
Though its root may grow old in the earth,
And its stump may die in the ground,
Yet at the scent of water it will bud
And bring forth branches like a plant.
But man dies and is laid away;
Indeed he breathes his last**

**And where *is* he?
As water disappears from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dries up,
So man lies down and does not rise.
Till the heavens *are* no more,
They will not awake Nor be roused from their sleep."**

a. **There is hope for a tree:** Job here observed that there is a sort of resurrection in the world of trees and plants; new life can sprout out of an old stump.

b. **But a man dies and is laid away:** As far as Job could see, death ends the existence of man, and after death a man simply disappears (and where is **he?**) As Job thought about it, it all seemed so unfair. Why should a tree have a better hope of resurrection than a man?

c. **So man lies down and does not rise... They will not awake nor be roused from their sleep:** We come to another place in the Book of Job reflecting the shadowy and uncertain understanding of the afterlife. We can simply say that Job was wrong in his understanding of the afterlife.

i. We can explain Job's lack of knowledge of the afterlife by understanding the principle of 2Ti 2:10 : that Jesus Christ *brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*. The understanding of immortality was at best cloudy in the Old Testament, but is much clearer in the New Testament. For example, we can say that Jesus knew fully what He was talking about when He described hell and judgment (such as in Mat 25:41-46). We therefore rely on the *New Testament* for our understanding of the afterlife, much more than the *Old*.

ii. We also understand that this does not in any way take away from the truth of the Bible and the Book of Job. What is true is that Job actually said this and

actually believed it; the truth of the statement itself must be evaluated according to the rest of the Bible.

iii. Later, God challenged and corrected Job's presumptuous assertions regarding the afterlife, reminding Job that he did not in fact know what life after death was like (Job 38:2; Job 38:17).

2. (13-17) *Job longs for the grave and hopes for something beyond.*

**"Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past,
That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!**

**If a man dies, shall he live *again*?
All the days of my hard service I will wait,
Till my change comes.
You shall call, and I will answer You;
You shall desire the work of Your hands.
For now You number my steps,
But do not watch over my sin.
My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,
And You cover my iniquity."**

a. **Oh, that You would hide me in the grave:** Job didn't know much about the condition of man after death, but he supposed – perhaps hoped – that it was better than his current misery. Yet Job's general uncertainty is reflected in his question, **"If a man dies, shall he live again?"**

i. "It was a tremendous question: but let us remind ourselves that there is no answer to it, save that which came to men through Jesus Christ and His Gospel. As Paul said, it is He 'Who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel' (2Ti 1:10). The question of Job was answered by Jesus, and that

so completely as to leave no room for doubt.”
(Morgan)

ii. “We read of that godly and learned Scotch divine, Mr. John Knox, that a little before his death he got up out of his bed, and being asked by his friends, why, being so sick, he would offer to rise, and not rather take his rest? He answered, that he had all the last night been taken up on the meditation of the resurrection, and that he would now go up into the pulpit, that he might impart to others the comforts which thereby himself had received. And surely if he had been able to have done as he desired, I know not what text fitter for his purpose he could have taken, than these words of Job, ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’” (Trapp)

b. All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes: Job looked for the **change** he hoped death to bring, that at least it would relieve him from his present agony.

i. “Even if God kills him (before his vindication?) he will *wait* in hope. His readiness to go down into death in faith transforms his ideas of Sheol... It is now seen as a temporary hiding place... It is another period of contracted *service*. Even if silent now, God will be heard then.” (Andersen)

ii. “Three glimpses of this glorious change were seen: 1. In Moses’ face. 2. In Christ’s transfiguration. 3. In Stephen’s countenance when he stood before the council. Such a change as this is well worth waiting for.”

iii. We also wait for our **change** to come.

- We shall be changed into immortality at the resurrection (1Co 15:50-53).

- When we see Him, we will be like Him (1Jn 3:2).
- Our bodies will be gloriously transformed (Php 3:21).
- David was confident he would be changed into God's likeness (Psa 17:15).

iv. At the same time, there are some things that will *not* change for the believer when they go to heaven.

- A Christian's purpose and priority of life does not change.
- A Christian's identity does not change.
- A Christian's companions will not change very much.

c. **You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands:** Job here hoped for a restoration of relationship with God after death, since he no longer really hoped for a restoration during this life.

i. We see the tension (perhaps confusion) in Job regarding the afterlife. To say, "**You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands**" is much more hopeful and positive than previous statements.

ii. The idea that God **shall desire the work of His hands** is powerful. "'Thou wilt *pant* with desire;' or, 'Thou wilt *yearn* over the work of thy hands.' God has subjected the creature to vanity, in *hope*; having determined the resurrection. Man is one of the noblest works of God. He has exhibited him as a master-piece of his creative skill, power, and goodness. Nothing less than the strongest call upon his justice could have induced him thus to destroy the work of his hands. No wonder that he has an earnest desire towards it... Even God is represented as *earnestly longing* for the ultimate reviviscence of the

sleeping dust. He cannot, he will not, forget the work of his hands.” (Clarke)

d. **But do not watch over my sin... You cover my iniquity:** Job prayed these words not only because he desperately wanted God to not judge him according to the full measure of his sins, but also because he wanted Zophar and the others to hear that Job did in fact know that he was a sinner, and not perfect (as Zophar accused Job of in Job 11:4).

i. **My transgression is sealed up in a bag:** “This includes two ideas: 1. Job’s transgressions were all *numbered*; not one was passed by. 2. They were sealed up; so that none of them could be lost. These bags were indifferently *sewed* or *sealed*, the two words in the text.” (Clarke)

3. (18-22) *Job considers the limitless power of God – and despairs.*

**“But as a mountain falls *and* crumbles away,
And as a rock is moved from its place;
As water wears away stones,
And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
So You destroy the hope of man.
You prevail forever against him, and he passes on;
You change his countenance and send him away.
His sons come to honor, and he does not know *it*;
They are brought low, and he does not perceive *it*.
But his flesh will be in pain over it,
And his soul will mourn over it.”**

a. **So You destroy the hope of man:** Job pictured a great mountain crumbling away, or a flood sweeping away great tracts of earth; he considered that this illustrated the way that God sweeps away the **hope of man**. The idea is that when God sets Himself against a

man, there is nothing the man can do; God will **prevail forever against him, and he passes on.**

i. In Job's poetic outpouring in Chapter 14, in the middle of the poem he gives his glorious confidence in the resurrection; yet the poem ends back in despair (**So You destroy the hope of man**). Yet it would be wrong to think that it means that Job's hope of resurrection was only temporary or fleeting. We should not be of those "expecting Job to use western logic in constructing his discourse so that an argument is followed through step by step until the result is reached at the end." (Andersen)

ii. "The author's real convictions may be stated in the middle of a poem, flanked before and after by contrasting opinions which he rejects. Verse 14-17 then constitute the high point of the speech, and reaffirm the faith already expressed in chapter 13, especially in verse 15." (Andersen)

b. **His sons come to honor, and he does not know it:** The man swept away by God does not know the good or bad things that happen to his family after he passes from this life. Job considered how fundamentally unfair all of this seemed; that somehow, even this swept away one's **flesh will be in pain over it** – over the *not knowing* as much as anything else.

c. **And his soul will mourn over it:** These words fittingly conclude this section recording Job's speech to his friends and his prayers to God. His **soul** is genuinely in mourning, and much of what we read is the agonized outpouring of his feelings.

i. It is easy to read these emotional outbursts and the lack of theological detachment in this *blameless and upright* man and think that Job was less spiritual than he should be. Yet we remember that the Book of Job

records many of Job's opinions (born out of great pain and frustration), opinions that are later corrected and reproved (Job 38:2; Job 38:17).

ii. We are somewhat reminded of Jesus' words at Mar 15:34 : *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* On the one hand, those words were a true and accurate description of how Jesus felt; He rightly felt *forsaken* by God the Father at that moment. He felt it because Jesus not only endured the *withdrawal* of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's *wrath* upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity. At the same time, we cannot say that the separation between the Father and the Son at the cross was complete, because as 2Co 5:19 says, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself* at the cross.

iii. According to the same example, we can say of Job's suffering that his feelings were real and understandable; yet there was a truth that went beyond his feelings that made sense of his suffering, *though that truth was completely veiled to Job*.

Eliphaz Accuses: Job Does Not Fear God

Job 15:1 (1-2) Empty words, Job! Empty words!

Job 15:3 No one who is wise would talk the way you do or defend himself with such meaningless words.

Job 15:4 If you had your way, no one would fear God; no one would pray to him.

Job 15:5 Your wickedness is evident by what you say; you are trying to hide behind clever words.

Job 15:6 There is no need for me to condemn you; you are condemned by every word you speak.

Job 15:7 Do you think you were the first person born? Were you there when God made the mountains?

Job 15:8 Did you overhear the plans God made? Does human wisdom belong to you alone?

Job 15:9 There is nothing you know that we don't know.

Job 15:10 We learned our wisdom from gray-haired people—those born before your father.

Job 15:11 God offers you comfort; why still reject it? We have spoken for him with calm, even words.

Job 15:12 But you are excited and glare at us in anger.

Job 15:13 You are angry with God and denounce him.

Job 15:14 Can any human being be really pure? Can anyone be right with God?

Job 15:15 Why, God does not trust even his angels; even they are not pure in his sight.

Job 15:16 And we drink evil as if it were water; yes, we are corrupt; we are worthless.

Job 15:17 Now listen, Job, to what I know.

Job 15:18 Those who are wise have taught me truths which they learned from their ancestors, and they kept no secrets hidden.

Job 15:19 Their land was free from foreigners; there was no one to lead them away from God.

Job 15:20 The wicked who oppress others will be in torment as long as they live.

Job 15:21 Voices of terror will scream in their ears, and robbers attack when they think they are safe.

Job 15:22 They have no hope of escaping from darkness, for somewhere a sword is waiting to kill them,

Job 15:23 and vultures are waiting to eat their corpses. They know their future is dark;

Job 15:24 disaster, like a powerful king, is waiting to attack them.

Job 15:25 That is the fate of those who shake their fists at God and defy the Almighty.

Job 15:26 (26-27) They are proud and rebellious; they stubbornly hold up their shields and rush to fight against God.

Job 15:28 They are the ones who captured cities and seized houses whose owners had fled, but war will destroy those cities and houses.

Job 15:29 They will not remain rich for long; nothing they own will last. Even their shadows will vanish,

Job 15:30 and they will not escape from darkness. They will be like trees whose branches are burned by fire, whose blossoms are blown away by the wind.

Job 15:31 If they are foolish enough to trust in evil, then evil will be their reward.

Job 15:32 Before their time is up they will wither, wither like a branch and never be green again.

Job 15:33 They will be like vines that lose their unripe grapes; like olive trees that drop their blossoms.

Job 15:34 There will be no descendants for godless people, and fire will destroy the homes built by bribery.

Job 15:35 These are the ones who plan trouble and do evil; their hearts are always full of deceit.

Job 15:1-35

Job 15 – Eliphaz Speaks in the Second Round of Speeches

A. Eliphaz criticizes Job a second time.

1. (1-6) The answer and accusation of Eliphaz.

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

“Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge,

And fill himself with the east wind?

Should he reason with unprofitable talk,

Or by speeches with which he can do no good?

Yes, you cast off fear,

**And restrain prayer before God.
For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.
Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
Yes, your own lips testify against you."**

a. **Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge:** Eliphaz was not impressed by Job's eloquent dependence on God as expressed in the previous chapters. He replied with a sharp rebuke of Job, accusing him of **empty knowledge**, of **unprofitable talk**, and of having **cast off fear**.

i. "As Job becomes more vehement, his friends become more severe. At first Eliphaz was gentle and courteous (Job 4:2). Now his politeness diminishes, and he bluntly accuses Job of folly and impiety." (Andersen)

ii. As the discussion becomes more heated, it also becomes more coarse. "In his opening lines Eliphaz accused Job of belching out a hot wind of useless words." (Smick) "The word translated *himself* is literally 'belly' (av). The intriguing possibility arises from the use of the pi'el verb *fill* as privative. This would reverse the meaning to 'empty', which suits the context. Eliphaz has become coarse. Job's speeches are an excretion of belly wind." (Andersen)

b. **Or by speeches with which he can do no good:** Eliphaz sought to discourage Job from his self-defense. "It isn't doing any good, Job. We aren't listening to you. You are not persuading us."

c. **And restrain prayer before God:** Eliphaz was wrong in his judgment of Job; though Eliphaz could not see Job's secret prayer life, he was a man of piety and prayer as Job 1 demonstrates.

i. Nevertheless, certainly some people do **restrain prayer before God**. Spurgeon considered ways that some do this.

- Some **restrain prayer before God** because they do not pray *often or regularly*.
- Some **restrain prayer before God** because they do not *prepare their hearts* properly to pray. They do not consider who they are praying to, the way their prayer should be made, that they are sinners, what they should ask of God, and thankful for what He has done in the past.
- Some **restrain prayer before God** because they pray in such a *formal, strict* manner that they never really pour out their heart before God.
- Some **restrain prayer before God** because they pray with *little faith* and much *unbelief*.

d. **Your own mouth condemns you, and not I:** Eliphaz insisted that Job was also condemning himself more every time he spoke. This is because in the perspective of Job's friends, the only words Job should speak are words of humble repentance for the sin that put him in this place.

2. (7-13) *Eliphaz accuses Job of a lack of understanding.*

"Are you the first man *who* was born?

Or were you made before the hills?

Have you heard the counsel of God?

Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

What do you know that we do not know?

***What* do you understand that *is* not in us?**

**Both the gray-haired and the aged *are* among us,
Much older than your father.**

***Are* the consolations of God too small for you,
And the word *spoken* gently with you?**

**Why does your heart carry you away,
And what do your eyes wink at,
That you turn your spirit against God,
And let *such* words go out of your mouth?"**

a. **Were you made before the hills:** Eliphaz argued along similar lines as God later did with Job in Chapters 38 and 39. They both appealed to Job to consider that he did not know as much as he thought he did. Yet, what Eliphaz thought Job didn't know was entirely different from what God knew Job didn't know.

b. **What do you know that we do not know:** Job could not claim to be the **first man who was born**, or could not claim he was **made before the hills**, or claim that he had **heard the counsel of God**. Yet Job could rightly claim to **know** more than his friends did in his situation. They "knew" Job was a particular and notorious sinner who needed to repent; Job *knew* that he was not, and that there must be some other reason for his crisis.

i. "Thus he goes on to jeer Job, and to accuse him of insolent arrogance, as if he had taken himself to be of God's cabinet-council, and so to have known more of his mind than any other." (Trapp)

ii. "The charges are not deserved. Job has made no such exaggerated claims. He had claimed only to be as intelligent as his friends (Job 12:3), not to have a monopoly of knowledge (Job 15:8)." (Andersen)

c. **Are the consolations of God too small for you:** It is important to remember that Eliphaz considered the **consolations of God** to be the advice of he and his friends. He assumed that if Job rejected their advice, he was rejecting God's **consolations**. Therefore, he thought that Job had turned his **spirit against God**.

i. "However wrong Eliphaz may have been in reference to Job and in reference to him his remarks were grossly unjust-yet many of them are correct in themselves, and may usefully be applied to our own hearts. Inasmuch as Eliphaz, in this verse, teaches no doctrine, but only asks two searching questions, he cannot mislead us; but he may do us good service." (Spurgeon)

ii. Spurgeon suggested what some of the consolations of God are that are considered by some to be **too small** and neglected or rejected:

- The **consolations of God** are applied by the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter.
- Jesus is the substance of these **consolations**, for He is called "The Consolation of Israel" (Luk 2:25)
- The **consolations of God** deal with our problem of sin; its guilt and stain and power.
- The **consolations of God** assure us of a new heart and nature.
- The **consolations of God** reveal a reason for sorrow that remains.
- The **consolations of God** show us One who suffers with us; Jesus Christ.
- The **consolations of God** compensate us for all trials and sufferings.
- The **consolations of God** tell us of our heavenly destination and hope.

B. Eliphaz groups Job with the wicked deserving of and receiving judgment.

1. (14-16) The universal impurity of mankind.

**“What *is* man, that he could be pure?
And *he who is* born of a woman, that he could be
righteous?
If *God* puts no trust in His saints,
And the heavens are not pure in His sight,
How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy,
Who drinks iniquity like water!”**

a. **What is man, that he could be pure:** Job and his friends have already argued over this point, with Zophar (among others) accusing Job of claiming to be pure and clean (Job 11:4). Job’s own admissions of sin have meant nothing to persuade his friends that not only is he a sinner in a general sense, but he must also be one in a particular and wicked sense.

b. **How much less man, who is abominable and filthy:** Eliphaz seems to have the angels in mind with the reference to **saints** in Job 15:15. If God **puts no trust in His saints**, then it is entirely logical that He has even less confidence in man, **who drinks iniquity like water**.

2. (17-26) *The suffering that comes upon the wicked.*

**“I will tell you, hear me;
What I have seen I will declare,
What wise men have told,
Not hiding *anything received* from their fathers,
To whom alone the land was given,
And no alien passed among them:
The wicked man writhes with pain all *his* days,
And the number of years is hidden from the
oppressor.
Dreadful sounds *are* in his ears;
In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.
He does not believe that he will return from darkness,
For a sword is waiting for him.**

**He wanders about for bread, saying, 'Where is it?'
He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.
Trouble and anguish make him afraid;
They overpower him, like a king ready for battle.
For he stretches out his hand against God,
And acts defiantly against the Almighty,
Running stubbornly against Him
With his strong, embossed shield."**

a. What I have seen I will declare, what wise men have told: Again, Job's friends appeal to the idea of tradition and "all the wise people know this." They speak in terms of cause-and-effect associations between human wickedness and received judgment and assume that this principle is always true in all cases – especially in Job's particular case.

i. "When once the sledge-hammer of tradition is brought to bear there is nothing more to say... The Pharisees adopted this method with Jesus... The 'Eliphaz' method has hindered more souls in developing the life with God than almost any other thing." (Chambers)

b. The wicked man writhes in pain all his days: "Job, it is only the **wicked** who suffer as you do. You are suffering in great **pain**; therefore you must be one of the **wicked**. The sooner you confess this and repent of it, the better it will be for you."

i. "If the friends are right, these and the army of the defeated whom they represent, those, the victims of the chances, as we say, of life, 'on whom the Tower of Siloam fell' are all rejected of God, all sinners beyond their brethren. And behind these, is the form of One, who was *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, from whom we, his fellow-men, who stood around his cross – hid as it*

were our faces, He was despised and we esteemed Him not." (Bradley)

c. He stretches out his hand against God, and acts defiantly against the Almighty: By association, Eliphaz clearly accuses Job of this arrogance and defiance, of virtually attacking God (**running stubbornly against Him with his strong, embossed shield**).

i. "If Eliphaz had been wise he would have seen what Job was getting at – 'Job is facing something I do not see; I don't understand his problem, but I will treat him with respect'. Instead of that he said, 'According to my traditional belief, you are a hypocrite, Job'." (Chambers)

ii. "There is no tenderness here. The philosophy of life is stated wholly on the negative side, and it was impossible for Job to misunderstand the meaning." (Morgan)

3. (27-35) The certainty of God's judgment against the wicked.

**"Though he has covered his face with his fatness,
And made *his* waist heavy with fat,
He dwells in desolate cities,
In houses which no one inhabits,
Which are destined to become ruins.
He will not be rich,
Nor will his wealth continue,
Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.
He will not depart from darkness;
The flame will dry out his branches,
And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
Let him not trust in futile *things*, deceiving himself,
For futility will be his reward.
It will be accomplished before his time,**

**And his branch will not be green.
He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine,
And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.
For the company of hypocrites *will be* barren,
And fire will consume the tents of bribery.
They conceive trouble and bring forth futility;
Their womb prepares deceit.”**

**a. Though he has covered his face with fatness...
He dwells in desolate cities:** Eliphaz poetically explained that the wicked may seem to succeed for a while (as Job did), but their success is only an illusion. They actually are lonely, poor, and in **darkness** (a true description of Job’s present state).

i. “Being fat in that world was not objectionable. It was the proof of prosperity. Here Eliphaz was admitting that the wicked do prosper; but as he said in Job 15:29, ‘His wealth will not endure.’” (Smick)

ii. There *was* wisdom in Eliphaz’s description of the ungodly and their destiny. The problem was that they did not apply to Job and his situation. “Apart from the fact that these words did not fit the case of Job, they constitute a magnificent description of the unutterable folly of the man who rebels.” (Morgan)

b. They conceive trouble and bring forth futility: In this indirect manner, Eliphaz accuses Job of all kinds of sin including hypocrisy, bribery, trouble-making, and lying.

i. “It was hard to convince Job, and it is hard to convince us, that that fair and dutiful life had been based on guilt and hypocrisy; that all this misery was the well-deserved, well-measured requital of a life that was a lie.” (Bradley)

ii. "As the discussion deepens we see all three of the friends growing more and more convinced that Job is his own worst enemy and that his trials are entirely of his own making." (Mason)

iii. "Poor Job! What a fight of affliction had he to contend with! His *body* wasted and tortured with sore *disease*, his *mind* harassed by *Satan*; and his *heart* wrung with the unkindness, and false accusations of his *friends*. No wonder he was greatly agitated, often distracted, and sometimes even thrown off his guard. However, all his enemies were chained; and beyond that chain they could not go. God was his unseen Protector, and did not suffer his faithful servant to be greatly moved." (Clarke)

Job Replies: Miserable Comforters Are You

Job 16:1 (1-2) I have heard words like that before; the comfort you give is only torment.

Job 16:3 Are you going to keep on talking forever? Do you always have to have the last word?

Job 16:4 If you were in my place and I in yours, I could say everything you are saying. I could shake my head wisely and drown you with a flood of words.

Job 16:5 I could strengthen you with advice and keep talking to comfort you.

Job 16:6 But nothing I say helps, and being silent does not calm my pain.

Job 16:7 You have worn me out, God; you have let my family be killed.

Job 16:8 You have seized me; you are my enemy. I am skin and bones, and people take that as proof of my guilt.

Job 16:9 In anger God tears me limb from limb; he glares at me with hate.

Job 16:10 People sneer at me; they crowd around me and slap my face.

Job 16:11 God has handed me over to evil people.

Job 16:12 I was living in peace, but God took me by the throat and battered me and crushed me. God uses me for target practice

Job 16:13 and shoots arrows at me from every side—arrows that pierce and wound me; and even then he shows no pity.

Job 16:14 He wounds me again and again; he attacks like a soldier gone mad with hate.

Job 16:15 I mourn and wear clothes made of sackcloth, and I sit here in the dust defeated.

Job 16:16 I have cried until my face is red, and my eyes are swollen and circled with shadows,

Job 16:17 but I am not guilty of any violence, and my prayer to God is sincere.

Job 16:18 O Earth, don't hide the wrongs done to me! Don't let my call for justice be silenced!

Job 16:19 There is someone in heaven to stand up for me and take my side.

Job 16:20 My friends scorn me; my eyes pour out tears to God.

Job 16:21 I want someone to plead with God for me, as one pleads for a friend.

Job 16:22 My years are passing now, and I walk the road of no return.

Job 16:1-22

Job 16 – Job Answers Eliphaz

A. Job laments his miserable comforters.

1. (1-5) Job reproaches his pitiless friends.

**Then Job answered and said:
“I have heard many such things;
Miserable comforters *are* you all!
Shall words of wind have an end?
Or what provokes you that you answer?
I also could speak as you *do*,
If your soul were in my soul’s place.
I could heap up words against you,
And shake my head at you;
But I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the comfort of my lips would relieve *your grief*.”**

a. **I have heard many such things:** Job reminded his critics that all they gave him was the “conventional wisdom” explanation of an absolute relationship of cause and effect to make sense of his suffering. Job’s friends said, “Everyone knows these things” (as in Job 15:14-15); Job’s response was, “It is all what we have heard before; **I have heard many such things.**”

i. “These sayings of the ancients are not strange to me; but they do not apply to my case: ye see me in affliction, ye should endeavour to console me. This ye do not; and yet ye pretend to do it! *Miserable comforters are ye all.*” (Clarke)

b. **Miserable comforters are you all:** Job hoped this reproach would shame his accusers into seeing just how greatly they failed to help him. Their too-great confidence in their own wisdom made them unable to properly sympathize with Job. They did much better in the days when they simply sat silently with the suffering Job (Job 2:11-13).

i. Trapp attempted to capture the heart of Job’s complaint: “You charge me for slighting the consolations of God, and pretend to come purposely to comfort me; but such cold comforters I have

seldom met with; for instead of abating and allaying my sorrows, you do all you can to increase and heighten them. Is this your kindness to your friend?"

ii. "Job, with purpose, chose a word (*amal*) Eliphaz used to suggest Job had conceived his own misery ('trouble,' Job 15:35); and he threw it back at him in the epithet 'miserable comforters' (Job 16:2)."
(Smick)

c. **Shall words of wind have an end:** Job just wanted his friends to stop their windy speeches, full of condemnation. It seems that this part of Job's trial was as severe as the losses described in Job 1 and 2.

i. "The chief reason for being suspicious of the theology of Job's friends is that it is so obviously lacking in mercy." (Mason)

d. **I also could speak as you do... I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you:** Job recognized that he could indeed be in the same place of unsympathetic condemnation towards his friends as they were towards him. Yet he also saw that his suffering had changed his perspective and would now instead **strengthen** and **comfort** them.

i. "The folly of criticizing sorrow from the vantage point of prosperity is declared. Job said that *he* could speak as *they* if they were in his place, but he would not do it. He would attempt to strengthen them."
(Morgan)

ii. One of the great advantages of personal suffering is that it makes the sufferer far more sympathetic towards others who suffer. Those who otherwise would have been harsh and strict towards those suffering will often find themselves much more willing

to give **strength** and **comfort** towards others who suffer similar grief (2Co 1:3-4).

2. (6-14) *Job laments the rejection by his friends.*

**“Though I speak, my grief is not relieved;
And *if* I remain silent, how am I eased?
But now He has worn me out;
You have made desolate all my company.
You have shriveled me up,
And it is a witness *against me*;
My leanness rises up against me
And bears witness to my face.
He tears *me* in His wrath, and hates me;
He gnashes at me with His teeth;
My adversary sharpens His gaze on me.
They gape at me with their mouth,
They strike me reproachfully on the cheek,
They gather together against me.
God has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.
I was at ease, but He has shattered me;
He also has taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;
He has set me up for His target,
His archers surround me.
He pierces my heart and does not pity;
He pours out my gall on the ground.
He breaks me with wound upon wound;
He runs at me like a warrior.”**

a. **Though I speak, my grief is not relieved; and if I remain silent, how am I eased:** Job felt trapped by both options. If he speaks, he finds no relief from his unsympathetic friends; yet silence does nothing to ease his grief.

i. "Many forms of grief find relief in expression... but Job says that he cannot get any assuagement of his grief through expressing it." (Chambers)

b. **Now He has worn me out:** Job here seemed close to surrender to God; to simply acknowledge that in his struggle with God, God had indeed won. God had stripped everything away from Job and exhausted him. Job's exhausted condition was **a witness against** him.

i. **You have made desolate all my company** either refers to the loss of Job's family (described in Job 1), or in the desolate manner of Job's unhelpful companions.

c. **He tears at me in His wrath, and hates me... my adversary sharpens His gaze on me:** Job felt he was in a supreme conflict; not with his friends, not with his circumstances, but with his God – or at least with his prior conception of God and how God worked things. His crisis threw all that prior conception into uncertainty, and he now felt that he was under attack from God.

i. Some commentators (such as Adam Clarke) believe that the **He** of Job 16:9 is Satan and not God; G. Campbell Morgan wondered if Job had "seen some faint outline of the shadow of the foe," having some perception of the work of Satan described in the first two chapters. Nevertheless, "Verse 11 explicitly names *God* as the assailant; but the plural in verse 10 suggests that Job is also complaining about God's human allies." (Andersen)

ii. "Eliphaz accused Job of attacking God, but Job claimed the reverse was true; God assailed him." (Smick)

iii. "It is infinitely painful to Job that God is now inexplicably acting like an enemy... Only a literal

translation can do justice to the savagery of Job's description of God's vicious attack. He is like a ferocious beast (16:9f.), a traitor (16:11), a wrestler (16:12a, b), an archer (12c, 13a), a swordsman (13b, 14)." (Andersen)

iv. "What strange language is this from him who elsewhere calleth God his salvation, his redeemer, Job 13:15-16; Job 13:18; Job 19:25, and will by-and-by call him his witness in heaven, to whom his eye poureth out tears!" (Trapp)

v. "He sees himself as the object of God's wrath. He pictures God as a savage beast, hunting him down, and tearing him apart limb from limb. Our suffering can give us a distorted view of God, can't it?" (Lawson)

vi. It seems that Job here wrestled with God just as intensely as Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord (Gen 32:22-32). The similarity of the struggle is instructive, given the difference in their character. Jacob wrestled with God as a carnal man who needed to be conquered. Job struggled with God as a godly man *also* needed to be conquered, or at least *more conquered*.

d. **They gather together against me:** Part of Job's agony was related to the idea that this entire struggle was so public, acted out in front of the audience of his friends and onlookers. At least Jacob's struggle with God was private; the public nature of Job's crisis made him feel that his friends were on God's side against him in some way, or used by God as another way to deepen his crisis (**God has delivered me to the ungodly**).

i. In recalling the attacks of the **ungodly**, Job remembered the cruel attacks of the Chaldeans and

Sabeans that came upon his servants and livestock, as recorded in the first chapter.

e. **I was at ease, but He has shattered me:** Job piled one poetic description upon another to powerfully communicate his feeling that God was against him. According to how Job felt:

- God had assaulted Job as in a street fight (**He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces**).
- God was the pitiless archer and Job was the target (**He has set me up for His target**).
- God was the warrior who utterly slew Job (**He breaks me with wound upon wound; He runs at me like a warrior**).

i. There is a sense in which Job is a prophetic picture of Jesus Christ, the righteous One on the cross who nevertheless became a target of God's righteous wrath; not because He deserved it, but because it was in the good and greater plan of God to do so.

ii. We especially recognize the idea from Job 16:10 : **They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me.** "Our Saviour was so served according to the letter; they gaped upon him, mowed at him, buffeted him on the face, gathered themselves together against him, as here. Hence some of the ancients call Job a figure and type of Christ, who was thus dealt with both literally and also figuratively." (Trapp)

iii. **He pours out my gall on the ground:** "The gall is affixed to the liver, and when that is poured out; the man cannot live, because his wound is mortal and incurable." (Trapp)

B. Job's continuing misery.

1. (15-17) Job wonders why his righteous life has deserved his dark trial.

**"I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,
And laid my head in the dust.
My face is flushed from weeping,
And on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death;
Although no violence *is* in my hands,
And my prayer *is* pure."**

a. **I have sewn sackcloth over my skin:** Job recounted the demonstrations of his grief including **sackcloth, dust** on the **head**, and **weeping**.

b. **Although no violence is in my hands, and my prayer is pure:** Job simply could not reconcile his previous righteous and pious life with his present desolation. Why would God attack (as described in Job 16:12-14) such a righteous and pious man?

i. **My prayer is pure:** "There is one thing that he will not let go – the testimony of his conscience, that he has lived as the friend of God, not as his enemy. He is certain that he does not belong to the class whose sins and punishment his friends have set before him for a warning. To this certainty he clings as to a plank in the devouring waves. Deep is his anguish, but he is conscience-free." (Bradley)

2. (18-22) Job protests to creation.

**"O earth, do not cover my blood,
And let my cry have no *resting* place!
Surely even now my witness *is* in heaven,
And my evidence *is* on high.
My friends scorn me;
My eyes pour out *tears* to God.
Oh, that one might plead for a man with God,**

**As a man *pleads* for his neighbor!
For when a few years are finished,
I shall go the way of no return."**

a. **O earth, do not cover my blood:** Job here begged the creation not to erase his life. If he were to die in his crises, Job at least wanted his blood to remain evident as a testimony.

i. "The earth is said to cover that blood which lies undiscovered and unrevenged; of which see on Gen 4:10-11; Isa 26:21." (Poole)

ii. "With a cry of almost bewildering boldness, he appeals to his mother-earth, from which the blood of righteous Abel once cried up to God, not to cover *his* blood, when the end comes at last, but to let the cry of his wronged life go up from her bosom, and find no rest till it has pierced the ear of God." (Bradley)

iii. "Job thought that he would die before he could be vindicated before his peers; so he was concerned that the injustice done to him should never be forgotten." (Smick)

b. **Surely even now my witness is in heaven:** We see here the mental and spiritual struggle at work in Job. A few verses before (as in Job 16:12-14), he believed God fought *against* him with all His divine strength and skill. Nevertheless, Job also truly did believe that he had a righteous **witness** in **heaven** that would vindicate him as all the **evidence** was revealed.

i. "In the midst of all this travail of soul, his faith triumphed over his doubt. He believed that God knew the truth about him, and would be his witness... This is another instance of the light breaking forth, if only for a moment, from his deepest life." (Morgan)

ii. "By 'witness' he intended a watcher, who knows, and knows all. He was surrounded by men who were perfectly honest, and were his friends, but who failed in what they were saying to him, because they did not know all. They thought they did... In the midst of the suffering of this misunderstanding, he declared his conviction that there was One in heaven watching, understanding, knowing all." (Morgan)

c. **My friends scorn me; my eyes pour out tears to God:** In one poetic and powerful sentence, Job described his present agony. He was sometimes confident in his future and ultimate vindication, yet also lived in the agony of his moment.

d. **Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor:** Job here recognized that what he needed was a true *advocate* in heaven; someone to **plead** his case before God.

i. Job anticipated the need that would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is both our mediator (1Ti 2:5) and our advocate (1Jn 2:1) in heaven before God the Father. "It is plain that the mystery of man's redemption by Christ was known to the ancient patriarchs, as hath been oft noted before, and to Job among others, Job 19:25." (Poole)

ii. Job knew that he needed a mediator, someone to bridge the gap between himself and a holy, great God. Job also knew by faith that such a Person existed and could be trusted. This made Job a believer in Jesus before Jesus ever walked the earth; he had faith in God's Messiah to come.

iii. In anticipation of the Messiah, Job essentially said: "Christ, who is God and man, will plead my cause with his Father; he can prevail, because he is God equal to

the Father; he will undertake it, because he will be man like to me." (Trapp)

iv. This reminds us that although the comfort of faith in God's unseen hand and plan was available to Job, it is even *more* available to us in light of the finished work of Jesus Christ and His exaltation to the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

e. For when a few years are finished, I shall go the way of no return: Job would not live long enough to see his longing fulfilled in Jesus Christ, yet He would be eventually comforted by the anticipation of that fulfillment.

i. "Perhaps it is enough to find here another expression of the thought that a man's short life-span does not give enough time to solve the problems of life. With increasing clarity Job is seeing that satisfactory answers might be gained only when he has more direct dealings with God after death." (Andersen)

Job Continues: Where Then Is My Hope?

Job 17:1 The end of my life is near. I can hardly breathe; there is nothing left for me but the grave.

Job 17:2 I watch how bitterly everyone mocks me.

Job 17:3 I am being honest, God. Accept my word. There is no one else to support what I say.

Job 17:4 You have closed their minds to reason; don't let them triumph over me now.

Job 17:5 In the old proverb someone betrays his friends for money, and his children suffer for it.

Job 17:6 And now people use this proverb against me; they come and spit in my face.

Job 17:7 My grief has almost made me blind; my arms and legs are as thin as shadows.

Job 17:8 Those who claim to be honest are shocked, and they all condemn me as godless.

Job 17:9 Those who claim to be respectable are more and more convinced they are right.

Job 17:10 But if all of them came and stood before me, I would not find even one of them wise.

Job 17:11 My days have passed; my plans have failed; my hope is gone.

Job 17:12 But my friends say night is daylight; they say that light is near, but I know I remain in darkness.

Job 17:13 My only hope is the world of the dead, where I will lie down to sleep in the dark.

Job 17:14 I will call the grave my father, and the worms that eat me I will call my mother and my sisters.

Job 17:15 Where is there any hope for me? Who sees any?

Job 17:16 Hope will not go with me when I go down to the world of the dead.

Job 17:1-16

Job 17 – Job Confronts both God and His Friends

A. Job directs a complaint both towards earth and towards heaven.

1. (1-2) Job's broken spirit.

**"My spirit is broken,
My days are extinguished,
The grave *is ready* for me.
Are not mockers with me?
And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?"**

a. **My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished:**
Job continued his same sense of defeat and brokenness as described in the previous chapter.

b. **Are not mockers with me:** The lack of sympathy and help from Job's friends – that they started out as sympathetic sufferers (as in Job 2:11-13) but became **mockers** when Job did not respond to their wisdom as they thought he should – was an especially painful aspect of his crisis.

2. (3-5) *Job begs heaven to sustain and support him.*

"Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself.

Who *is* he *who* will shake hands with me?

For You have hidden their heart from understanding;

Therefore You will not exalt *them*.

He who speaks flattery to *his* friends,

Even the eyes of his children will fail."

a. **Who is he who will shake hands with me:** Job felt – rightly so, according to his circumstances – that heaven was against him. Here, he pleaded for an agreement of peace between himself and heaven.

i. The NIV translation of Job 17:3 is helpful: *Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?* The idea is that Job cried out to God and said, "You will have to set this right God; it is beyond me to do it." This is especially meaningful in light of the main idea of Job's friends, that it was *his* responsibility to repent and set things right between himself and God.

ii. In a small way, Job grasped the whole tone of salvation under the New Covenant: *God* has made the atonement and the reconciliation; we do not have to do it ourselves.

b. **You have hidden their heart from understanding:**

Job understood that if God had wanted to inform the hearts of his friends, He was fully capable of doing so.

Ultimately, even the unsympathetic manner of his friends was an aspect of Job's crisis allowed by God.

c. **Therefore You will not exalt them:** At the same time, Job's friends were accountable for their lack of **understanding**. God's withholding of **understanding** from them was an evidence of His displeasure towards them.

d. **He who speaks flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children will fail:** Job here seemed to justify his harsh words towards his friends. He recognizes that it would be a bad reflection on his character if he were to simply flatter them.

i. "Verse 5 is a proverb. Job was reminding his counselors of the dire consequences of slander."
(Smick)

B. A faint, bright glimmer in the hopeless condition of Job.

1. (6-9) Job explains his present condition and the ultimate resolution he trusts in.

**"But He has made me a byword of the people,
And I have become one in whose face men spit.
My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow,
And all my members *are* like shadows.
Upright *men* are astonished at this,
And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.
Yet the righteous will hold to his way,
And he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger."**

a. **He has made me a byword of the people, and I have become one in whose face men spit:** Job here spoke with poetic power of his own humiliation, and how

greatly he had been humbled. It reminds us of the universal principle of *the humiliation of man*.

i. Job's own humiliation was so complete that he could say, "**Upright men are astonished at this.**" Onlookers found it hard to believe that this righteous man had been so seriously afflicted.

ii. Our own humiliation is inevitable. The frailty of humanity and the fallen nature of this world combine together to make the humiliation of man certain, yet it may come in many forms. Our humiliation may come to us through our own sin, through our own weaknesses, through circumstances beyond our control, or by what others put upon us.

iii. Thankfully, the humiliation of humanity has its model and sympathy in the life of Jesus. He climbed the ladder down from heaven's glory to the lowest of human experience (Php 2:5-8) to give both meaning and dignity to the humiliation of man.

iv. We are also thankful that humiliation serves as a gateway to grace. The principle stands true: *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (Pro 3:34, Jas 4:6, 1Pe 5:5).

b. **He has made me a byword of the people:** Though Job recognized his own humiliation, he also proclaimed the *sovereignty of God*. He did not find the cause of his crisis in blind fate or even human cruelty. He understood that if he was indeed **a byword of the people** and a man **in whose face men spit**, it was because God had **made** him so.

i. Job and his friends did not agree on much, but they did agree on this. They disagreed on the reasons *why* God had **made** him so, but all saw the sovereign and great hand of God behind it.

ii. Understanding this can help us – though it was obviously difficult for Job and for us in similar circumstances – that God has a good and loving plan, even in allowing our humiliation.

iii. Job indeed became **a byword of the people**. “My afflictions and calamities have become a subject of general conversation, so that my poverty and affliction are proverbial. *As poor as Job, As afflicted as Job*, are proverbs that have even reached our times and are still in use.” (Clarke)

c. **Yet the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger:** In this section, Job added a final, emphatic point, declaring *the victory of the righteous*. Even in his crisis, he had flashes of faith that lit up the night of his misery.

i. This victory comes in *endurance*, as **the righteous will hold to his way**. Job would himself experience this victory as he endured through his severe and long season of crisis.

ii. This victory comes in *progression*, as **he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger**. Job’s situation did not get better in an instant. There were flashes of inspiration and clarity, but overall God brought him through the crisis in a prolonged experience.

iii. “In several of these verses Job is supposed to speak prophetically of his future restoration, and of the good which religious society should derive from the history of his original affluence, consequent poverty and affliction, and final restoration to health, peace, and prosperity.” (Clarke)

iv. **Yet the righteous will hold to his way:** F.B. Meyer gave several reasons why this was so.

- "You shall hold on your way because Jesus holds you in his strong hand. He is your Shepherd; He has vanquished all your foes, and you shall never perish."
- "You shall hold on your way because the Father has designed through you to glorify His Son; and there must be no gaps in his crown where jewels ought to be."
- "You shall hold on your way because the Holy Spirit has designed to make you his residence and home; and He is within you the perennial spring of a holy life."

2. (10-16) *Job's sense of hopelessness.*

**"But please, come back again, all of you,
For I shall not find *one wise man* among you.
My days are past,
My purposes are broken off,
Even the thoughts of my heart.
They change the night into day;
'The light *is* near,' *they say*, in the face of darkness.
If I wait *for* the grave *as* my house,
If I make my bed in the darkness,
If I say to corruption,
'You *are* my father,'
And to the worm,
'You *are* my mother and my sister,'
Where then *is* my hope?
As for my hope, who can see it?
Will they go down to the gates of Sheol?
Shall we *have* rest together in the dust?"**

a. **For I shall not find one wise man among you:** Job here threw down the rhetorical challenge to his friends

once more, insulting them as they had insulted him.

b. My days are past, my purposes are broken off:

Job accepted now that his good years and strong years were behind him, and anticipated not the quick death he once longed for, but perhaps a progressive loss of strength and ability until he simply perished.

c. They change the night into day; 'The light is near,' they say, in the face of darkness: Job thought of his approaching death and took comfort in it. It would transform his current **night into day**. The **corruption** of the grave would be as close to him as a family member.

i. "The counselors had said that night would be turned to day for Job if only he would get right with God (cf. Job 11:17). In Job 17:12-16 Job made a parody of their advice. It was like going to the grave with the notion that all you have to do is treat it like home where warmth and loved one are and it will become so." (Smick)

ii. "See how he bespeaks corruption and the worms, as if he were of family with them, and nearest of kin to them; so doth he court them, as it were, that they might be willing to receive him; showing withal how willing he was to die." (Trapp)

d. Where then is my hope: At the same time, this comfort did not sit well with Job. He recognized that it was a slender and frail hope to trust in the grave; he could not be confident that **hope** would follow him down to **Sheol** and give him **rest**.

i. Job therefore concludes this speech with a conflicted hope; wishing for death but not being satisfied or confident in that hope. What he really wanted was a

resolution from God, but seems to have given up hope for that.

ii. "Job himself, though sometimes strongly confident, is often harassed with doubts and fears upon the subject, insomuch that his sayings and experience often appear contradictory. Perhaps it could not be otherwise; the true light was not then come: Jesus alone brought life and immortality to light by his Gospel." (Clarke)

Bildad Speaks: God Punishes the Wicked

Job 18:1 (1-2) Job, can't people like you ever be quiet? If you stopped to listen, we could talk to you.

Job 18:3 What makes you think we are as stupid as cattle?

Job 18:4 You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Will the earth be deserted because you are angry? Will God move mountains to satisfy you?

Job 18:5 The light of the wicked will still be put out; its flame will never burn again.

Job 18:6 The lamp in their tents will be darkened.

Job 18:7 Their steps were firm, but now they stumble; they fall—victims of their own advice.

Job 18:8 They walk into a net, and their feet are caught;

Job 18:9 a trap catches their heels and holds them.

Job 18:10 On the ground a snare is hidden; a trap has been set in their path.

Job 18:11 All around them terror is waiting; it follows them at every step.

Job 18:12 They used to be rich, but now they go hungry; disaster stands and waits at their side.

Job 18:13 A deadly disease spreads over their bodies and causes their arms and legs to rot.

Job 18:14 They are torn from the tents where they lived secure, and are dragged off to face King Death.

Job 18:15 Now anyone may live in their tents—after sulfur is sprinkled to disinfect them!

Job 18:16 Their roots and branches are withered and dry.

Job 18:17 Their fame is ended at home and abroad; no one remembers them any more.

Job 18:18 They will be driven out of the land of the living, driven from light into darkness.

Job 18:19 They have no descendants, no survivors.

Job 18:20 From east to west, all who hear of their fate shudder and tremble with fear.

Job 18:21 That is the fate of evil people, the fate of those who care nothing for God.

Job 18:1-21

Job 18 – Bildad Speaks a Second Time

A. Bildad's objection.

1. (1-3) Bildad rebukes Job for his words and low opinion of his friends.

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

"How long *till* you put an end to words?

Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.

Why are we counted as beasts,

***And* regarded as stupid in your sight?"**

a. **How long till you put an end to words:** Bildad basically returned Job's words in Job 16:3. It seems that they were all getting tired of hearing each other talk, yet the matter was far from resolved.

i. "Bildad again addresses Job in the plural (Job 8:2) probably speaking to him as representing a class: as

Job had done before in his reply to Zophar (Job 12:2).” (Bullinger)

b. **Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak. Why are we counted as beasts, and regarded as stupid in your sight:** Bildad continued to trade insults with Job. They accused each other of being dense and **stupid** as **beasts**.

i. “Bildad herein sinned against the law of love, as likewise he doth much more in the following vehement interrogation, charging Job with insolent boldness against God.” (Trapp)

2. (4) *Bildad tells Job to look to himself and the unchangeable laws of life.*

**“You who tear yourself in anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you?
Or shall the rock be removed from its place?”**

a. **You who tear yourself in anger:** Bildad told Job, “Just look at yourself. You are tearing yourself to pieces in anger. Your condition is all the evidence anyone needs to see that you are in sin and need to repent.”

i. “In 16:9 Job had identified God as his torturer, tearing him to pieces. Bildad replies that it is Job... who is tearing himself to pieces by his needless rage.” (Andersen)

b. **Shall the earth be forsaken for you:** Bildad felt that Job wanted to overturn unchangeable laws of life; mainly the laws of cause and effect that tell us Job has caused his own crisis by his sin and refusal to repent.

i. “He was angry, moreover, because he considered that Job’s attitude threatened the moral order with violence, and he reminded Job that stable things could not be changed for his sake.” (Morgan)

ii. Adam Clarke attempted to capture Bildad's thought: "To say the least, afflictions are the common lot of men. Must God work a miracle in providence, in order to exempt thee from the operation of natural causes? Dost thou wish to engross all the attention and care of providence to thyself alone? What pride and insolence!"

B. Bildad describes the afflictions of the wicked.

1. (5-6) The dark life of the wicked.

**"The light of the wicked indeed goes out,
And the flame of his fire does not shine.
The light is dark in his tent,
And his lamp beside him is put out."**

a. **The light of the wicked indeed goes out:** Bildad wanted to teach Job about the life and fate of the wicked, and in doing so he hoped that Job would get the idea that he was among the wicked that Bildad described.

i. "Bildad's concern, however, was to establish in Job's mind the absolute certainty that every wicked man gets paid in full, in this life, for his wicked deeds."
(Smick)

b. **The light is dark in his tent:** At the end of Job's previous speech (Job 17:10-16), he described the darkness of his life and prospects, all in the gloomy context of the grave as a welcome home. Bildad wanted Job to see that this dark outlook on life meant that he was among the wicked.

2. (7-10) The dangerous path of the wicked.

**"The steps of his strength are shortened,
And his own counsel casts him down.
For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walks into a snare.
The net takes *him* by the heel,**

**And a snare lays hold of him.
A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground,
And a trap for him in the road."**

a. **The steps of his strength are shortened:** Bildad here described the wicked man as someone weak in his steps, unable or unwilling to continue the journey of life. He felt this accurately described Job and set him among the wicked men.

b. **He walks into a snare:** Not only is the wicked man weak in his journey, he is also on a dangerous path. He walks right into trouble, and **the net takes him by the heel**. In Bildad's perspective, Job has walked into his own crisis, **and a snare lays hold of him**.

i. "Six different names of hunting-devices are used in these verses. Precise identification of all these items of equipment is still not possible, as a comparison of current translations quickly shows." (Andersen)

3. (11-16) The miserable life of the wicked.

**"Terrors frighten him on every side,
And drive him to his feet.
His strength is starved,
And destruction *is* ready at his side.
It devours patches of his skin;
The firstborn of death devours his limbs.
He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent,
And they parade him before the king of terrors.
They dwell in his tent *who are* none of his;
Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling.
His roots are dried out below,
And his branch withers above."**

a. **Terrors frighten him on every side:** Again, Bildad takes previous statements of Job and turns them back upon him. Job spoke in his previous speech about how he

felt attacked and assaulted by God on every side (Job 16:9-14). Bildad regarded this as proof of Job's wickedness.

b. It devours patches of his skin: Part of Job's medical crisis was skin disease (Job 30:30 a, 7:5b, and 2:7-8). Bildad says, "The wicked have terrible problems with their skin. That means you are among the wicked, Job."

i. Andersen gives a vivid translation of Job 18:12-13 :

*His plump body becomes emaciated,
His ribs stick right out,
Disease corrodes his skin,
Death's eldest son swallows his organs.*

c. He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent: Bildad made the simple calculation that the wicked suffer such great crises; Job suffered in a great crisis; therefore Job must be among the wicked, and the sooner Job realized it, the better.

d. They parade him before the king of terrors: This seems to be a marvelously poetic description of death itself, given the horrific title the King of Terrors.

i. "Death is personified in Job 18:13-14. This king of terrors reminds us of the Canaanite deity Mot (Death) whose gullet reaches from earth to sky – the devouring deity." (Smick)

ii. "The incomparable phrase *the king of terrors* is another reference to death, and the repetition of the same Hebrew word for *terrors* marks verses 11-14 as a single unit." (Andersen)

iii. "So the ancients spoke of death. They were constantly pursued by the dread of the unknown. Every unpeopled or distant spot was the haunt and dwelling-place of evil and dreadful objects. But the

grave, and the world beyond, were above all terrible, and death the King of Terrors.” (Meyer)

iv. Sadly, this regard of death did not completely die with the Christian era. The author recalls reading the following inscription on an Irish tombstone on the Hill of Slane, outside of Dublin:

*O cruel Death you well may boast
Of all Tyrants thou art the most
As you all mortals can control
The Lord have mercy on my soul* (1782)

e. **Brimstone is scattered on his habitation:** “This may either refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as has already been intimated, or to an ancient custom of *fumigating houses* with brimstone, in order to *purify* them from defilement.” (Clarke)

4. (17-21) *The sad destiny of the wicked.*

**“The memory of him perishes from the earth,
And he has no name among the renowned.
He is driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
He has neither son nor posterity among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.
Those in the west are astonished at his day,
As those in the east are frightened.
Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,
And this *is* the place of *him* who does not know God.”**

a. **The memory of him perishes from the earth:** In his previous speech, Job pled for the earth to cry out on his behalf, testifying of his innocence before God (Job 16:18-19). Here, Bildad told Job that there was no possibility of this if he should die in his wicked state. If so, he would simply be among those whose **memory... perishes from the earth.**

b. He has neither son nor posterity among the people: This was an especially cruel statement to one who had lost all ten of his children (including seven sons) in a tragic accident (Job 1:2; Job 1:18-19). Bildad felt that such cruelty was necessary to wake Job up from his self-deception.

i. "Bildad gives a transparent allegory which is singularly cruel in its obvious reference to Job's bereavement. The last state, having *no offspring, descendant or survivor*, is the worst. Bildad has listed the things most dreaded by an Israelite in life and in death as the tokens of rejection by God." (Andersen)

c. This is the place of him who does not know God: Bildad carried his attack yet further. Not only was Job among **the wicked**, he was also one **who does not know God**. This was a cruel and false statement to make against a man who was *blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil* (Job 1:1).

i. "This is a tremendously powerful delineation of the way of wickedness. Again we have to say – all true, and therefore to be taken to heart; but not all the truth, and therefore of no meaning in the case of Job." (Morgan)

ii. "Bildad describes the worst man he can think of, and Job says, 'All this has happened to me, and you say therefore I must be a bad man, but I say I am not. You have the logic of your creed, while I have the reality of my experience... The God who will explain my experience I have not yet found, but I am confident there is such a God and meantime I refuse to accept your counterfeit of Him.'" (Chambers)

iii. "It is not Job's wickedness but his faithfulness that the Lord is disclosing through this ordeal. In fact there may be nothing our God wants more than to bring

each one of us to the point where He can do with us exactly what He did with Job: hand us over with perfect confidence into the clutches of Satan, knowing that even then our faith will hold." (Mason)

Job Replies: My Redeemer Lives

Job 19:1 (1-2) Why do you keep tormenting me with words?

Job 19:3 Time after time you insult me and show no shame for the way you abuse me.

Job 19:4 Even if I have done wrong, how does that hurt you?

Job 19:5 You think you are better than I am, and regard my troubles as proof of my guilt.

Job 19:6 Can't you see it is God who has done this? He has set a trap to catch me.

Job 19:7 I protest his violence, but no one is listening; no one hears my cry for justice.

Job 19:8 God has blocked the way, and I can't get through; he has hidden my path in darkness.

Job 19:9 He has taken away all my wealth and destroyed my reputation.

Job 19:10 He batters me from every side. He uproots my hope and leaves me to wither and die.

Job 19:11 God is angry and rages against me; he treats me like his worst enemy.

Job 19:12 He sends his army to attack me; they dig trenches and lay siege to my tent.

Job 19:13 God has made my own family forsake me; I am a stranger to those who knew me;

Job 19:14 my relatives and friends are gone.

Job 19:15 Those who were guests in my house have forgotten me; my servant women treat me like a stranger and a foreigner.

Job 19:16 When I call a servant, he doesn't answer—even when I beg him to help me.

Job 19:17 My wife can't stand the smell of my breath, and my own brothers won't come near me.

Job 19:18 Children despise me and laugh when they see me.

Job 19:19 My closest friends look at me with disgust; those I loved most have turned against me.

Job 19:20 My skin hangs loose on my bones; I have barely escaped with my life.

Job 19:21 You are my friends! Take pity on me! The hand of God has struck me down.

Job 19:22 Why must you persecute me the way God does? Haven't you tormented me enough?

Job 19:23 How I wish that someone would remember my words and record them in a book!

Job 19:24 Or with a chisel carve my words in stone and write them so that they would last forever.

Job 19:25 But I know there is someone in heaven who will come at last to my defense.

Job 19:26 Even after my skin is eaten by disease, while still in this body I will see God.

Job 19:27 I will see him with my own eyes, and he will not be a stranger. My courage failed because you said,

Job 19:28 "How can we torment him?" You looked for some excuse to attack me.

Job 19:29 But now, be afraid of the sword—the sword that brings God's wrath on sin, so that you will know there is one who judges.

Job 19:1-29

Job 19 – Job's Answer to Bildad: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

A. Job laments his comfortless affliction.

1. (1-6) Job complains that his friends have not understood him at all.

Then Job answered and said:

**"How long will you torment my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
These ten times you have reproached me;
You are not ashamed *that* you have wronged me.
And if indeed I have erred,
My error remains with me.
If indeed you exalt *yourselves* against me,
And plead my disgrace against me,
Know then that God has wronged me,
And has surrounded me with His net."**

a. **How long will you torment my soul:** Job answered Bildad with a familiar complaint, that his friends were unsympathetic tormentors of his **soul**.

i. "They struck at him with their hard words, as if they were breaking stones on the roadside. We ought to be very careful what we say to those who are suffering affliction and trial, for a word, though it seems to be a very little thing, will often cut far more deeply and wound far more terribly than a razor would." (Spurgeon)

ii. We might say that many in the church today are as unloving as Job's friends were. "The church has become very jealous about men being unsound in the faith. If a man becomes unsound in the faith, they draw their ecclesiastical swords and cut at him. But he may be ever so unsound in love, and they don't say anything." (D.L. Moody)

iii. "Job's friends have been, by the general consent of posterity, consigned to endless infamy. May all those

who follow their steps be equally enrolled in the annals of bad fame!" (Clarke)

b. **And if indeed I have erred, My error remains with me:** Job was steadfast in his refusal to agree with his friends that he had caused his crisis by some remarkable sin and refusal to repent.

c. **Know then that God has wronged me, and has surrounded me with His net:** Job insisted to his friends that he was not a guilty victim before a righteous God. If God had sent or allowed this calamity in Job's life, it could be said that God had **wronged** Job because the calamity was not a just penalty for some sin in Job.

i. And of course, allowing for the emotional aspect of this pained outpouring, we understand how Job would say, "**Know then that God has wronged me.**" He had reason to think this, and poured out his honest feelings before God and his friends.

ii. "In a sense the Accuser was acting as the hand of God, for he had said to God, 'But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh' (2:5). And God had replied, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands' (2:6). So Job was not totally wrong when he said, 'The hand of God has struck me' (19:21)." (Smick)

2. (7-12) *Job describes how God has attacked him.*

**"If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard.
If I cry aloud, *there is* no justice.
He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass;
And He has set darkness in my paths.
He has stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown *from* my head.
He breaks me down on every side,
And I am gone;
My hope He has uprooted like a tree.**

**He has also kindled His wrath against me,
And He counts me as *one of His enemies*.
His troops come together
And build up their road against me;
They encamp all around my tent."**

a. If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard:

Job here complained at what was the core of his crisis. Job was accustomed to finding comfort and some sense of an answer from God in his previous trials. Yet now when he cried out to heaven, he heard no reply.

i. "Nothing is more natural and usual than for men in misery to cry out for help. Job's great grief was, that neither God nor man would regard his moans or deliver him out of the net." (Trapp)

b. He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass:

This is reminiscent of Job's complaint in Job 3:23, where he sadly said that he was one *whom God has hedged in*.

c. He has stripped me of my glory...: With a deeply moving poetic style, Job described how he felt God had brought him low. He was like a king uncrowned, like a house with its walls broken down, and like an **uprooted** tree.

d. He counts me as one of His enemies: Though Job could not comprehend it (nor be expected to), God still held him in special favor and care. God put Job into a place where he was expected to believe *despite* what seemed to be irrefutable circumstances and personal feelings.

e. They encamp all around my tent: In Job 19:8-12, Job recounts the reverse progression of an ancient siege and conquering of a city; yet the irony was that Job was not like a mighty city, but only like a humble **tent**.

i. We can see the reverse progress starting at Job 19:8 :

- Captivity (**I cannot pass; and He has set darkness in my paths**).
- Dethronement (**taken the crown from my head**).
- Being like a wall torn down (**He breaks me down on every side**).
- Being like an uprooted tree (**my hope He has uprooted like a tree**).
- Having a siege set against him (**build up their road against me**).
- Being surrounded (**they encamp all around my tent**).

ii. "Reverse this order and you have a step-by-step description of what happened in siege warfare... God's troops laid siege as if Job were a fortified city; but, alas, he was only a tent." (Smick)

3. (13-20) *Job describes the bitter results of God's attack upon him.*

**"He has removed my brothers far from me,
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.**

**My relatives have failed,
And my close friends have forgotten me.
Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants,
Count me as a stranger;**

**I am an alien in their sight.
I call my servant, but he gives no answer;
I beg him with my mouth.**

**My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am repulsive to the children of my own body.
Even young children despise me;**

**I arise, and they speak against me.
All my close friends abhor me,
And those whom I love have turned against me.
My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,
And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth."**

a. **He has removed my brothers far from me:** Job probably meant his three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar). He once regarded them as close **brothers**, but now felt they had forsaken him and turned against him.

b. **I call my servant, but he gives no answer:** Before his crisis, Job was a wealthy and influential man. Yet now even his own servants did not obey or respect him.

c. **My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am repulsive to the children of my own body:** Job was in such a miserable state, both physically and spiritually, that his wife wanted nothing to do with him (as in Job 2:9). The **children** Job refers to here must be either grandchildren or those who were symbolically Job's children; it seems that all of Job's ten children were killed in a tragic accident (Job 1:2; Job 1:18-19).

i. Yet Adam Clarke had another suggestion: "But the mention of his *children* in this place may intimate that he had still some remaining; that there might have been *young ones*, who, not being of a proper age to attend the festival of their elder brothers and sisters, escaped that sad catastrophe."

ii. It may also be that Job had in mind that his children cursed or rejected him from the world beyond; he felt that from their place in the after-life, they regarded him as **repulsive**.

iii. "In any society nothing hurts more than rejection by one's family and friends, but what could be worse

in a patriarchal society than to have children ridicule the patriarch?" (Smick)

iv. "The corruption of his inwards (besides the noisomeness of his outward ulcers) made his breath strong and unwholesome." (Trapp)

d. My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth: Job here referred to his emaciated and unhealthy condition, and just how close he was to physical death.

i. "The bones nearly pierce and show through the skin, appearing to cleave to the skin." (Bullinger)

ii. **By the skin of my teeth:** "There is no skin upon the teeth, or scarcely any, and, therefore, Job means that there was next to nothing of him left, like the skin of his teeth." (Spurgeon)

iii. "The KJV made a literal translation of it and thereby created an idiom in the English language for a narrow escape (by the skin of my teeth)." (Smick) Some think that Job meant that only his gums were left unaffected by his diseased condition. Others suggest that Job was so tortured that he gnawed at his skin with his teeth, or on his own lips in agony.

iv. The Puritan commentator John Trapp had another idea: "All I have left me whole is the skin of my teeth; that is, of my gums, into which my teeth are engrafted; the rest of my body is all over of a scab... Junius gives this gloss, Job had nothing left him but the instrument of speech. These, say some, the devil purposely meddled not with, as hoping that therewith he would curse God."

B. Job proclaims his trust in God as redeemer and judge.

1. (21-22) Job pleads for pity from his friends.

**"Have pity on me, have pity on me,
O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me!
Why do you persecute me as God *does*,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?"**

a. **Have pity on me, O you my friends:** In light of the eloquence and truth of his previous complaint, Job called upon his friends to therefore **pity** him. Instead of joining against him in a concert of condemnation, they should have had **pity** on this one so afflicted by the **hand of God**.

b. **Why do you persecute me as God does:** Job made his appeal to God and felt there was no reply given. Now, he appealed to his friends and hoped to at least turn their hearts towards him.

2. (23-29) Job's triumphant proclamation of faith.

**"Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
That they were engraved on a rock
With an iron pen and lead, forever!
For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!
If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?';
Since the root of the matter is found in me,
Be afraid of the sword for yourselves;
For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword,
That you may know *there is* a judgment."**

a. **Oh, that my words were written:** Job seemed to have no sense that his own personal tragedy and drama would indeed be **written** and **inscribed in a book** and be so for the benefit of countless others through succeeding generations. His words and life were indeed written **with an iron pen and lead, forever!**

b. **For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth:** This is another of the brilliant flashes of faith in Job's otherwise dark and bleak background of crisis and suffering. Perhaps as he considered that future generations would indeed look at his life and words, it stirred him to a triumphant proclamation of faith.

i. The word translated **Redeemer** is *goel*, presenting one of the wonderful concepts of the Old Testament. "The 'Goel' stood for another to defend his cause, to avenge wrongs done to him, and so to acquit him of all charges laid against him." (Morgan)

ii. "A redeemer was a vindicator of one unjustly wronged. He was a defender of the oppressed. A champion of the suffering. An advocate of one unjustly accused. If you were ever wronged, a redeemer would come and stand beside you as your champion and advocate." (Lawson)

iii. "The meaning of the word *goel* ('redeemer') is fundamental to understanding this passage. The word is important in Old Testament jurisprudence. It had both a criminal and a civil aspect. As 'blood avenger,' a *goel* had a responsibility to avenge the blood of a slain kinsman (Num 35:12-28). He was not seeking revenge but justice. On the civil side he was a redeemer or vindicator. Here he had the responsibility to 'buy back' and so redeem the lost inheritance of a

deceased relative... As such he was the defender or champion of the oppressed.” (Smick)

iv. “When Job, amid the desolation, declared that he had a ‘Goel’ living and active, he was uttering a profound truth, the truth that in God, man has a Redeemer in all the fullest senses of that great word. It was a spiritual apprehension of an abiding fact, which fact came into clear shining when God was manifest in flesh.” (Morgan)

v. “Christ’s kinship with his people is to be thought of with great comfort because it is voluntary. We have some, perhaps, who are akin to us, yet, who wish they were not. Many a time, when a rich man has poor relations, he is half ashamed of the kinship between them, and wishes that it did not exist. Shame upon him for thinking so! But our Lord Jesus Christ’s relationship to us is no accident of birth; it was voluntarily assumed by him.” (Spurgeon)

vi. “Remember, too, that it was always considered to be the duty of the goel, not merely to redeem by price, but where that failed, to redeem by power... There are two redemptions, — redemption by price and redemption by power, and both of these Christ hath wrought for us; — by price, by his sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary; and by power, by his Divine Spirit coming into our heart, and renewing our soul.” (Spurgeon)

c. **For I know:** We are impressed with Job’s *certainty*. This was something that he *knew*; it was much more than a hope and more than a guess.

d. **That my Redeemer:** Job knew that he *had* a **Redeemer**; someone to rescue him from his crisis and despair and every accusation set against him.

i. "Verses 25-27 are so tightly knit that there should be no doubt that the *Redeemer is God*." (Andersen)

ii. "Job cannot understand why God is now acting so completely out of character with what he has always believed. He must somehow recover his friendship with God by means which supersede the theological calculus of the friends. He boldly claims God as his nearest relative." (Andersen)

e. **That my Redeemer lives:** Job knew that his **Redeemer** was *alive*, and that because He lived, He could also bring life to Job.

f. **And shall stand at last on the earth:** This meant that Job knew his **Redeemer** was more than a spiritual concept; He was a living being who could **stand at last on the earth**. Job knew his **Redeemer** would come to comfort and vindicate him, though to this point he had been conspicuously without evident comfort from God.

i. "At the end of chapter 16 Job was obsessed with the notion that someone in heaven would stand up for him and plead his case. But here in chapter 19 he expected to witness his own vindication on earth." (Smick)

g. **And after my skin is destroyed:** At this point, Job held no more hope for the preservation of his flesh; he knew that his **skin** would be **destroyed** (it was already in bad condition according to Job 2:7-8).

h. **This I know, that in my flesh I shall see God:** Though Job expected the destruction of his skin to be completed, at the same time he had the confidence of faith to know that God would not hide Himself forever; that "**in my flesh I shall see God**." This would be the moment of Job's comfort, restoration, and vindication;

and he would have confidence in it even if it, only came after life on this earth was over.

i. "Beyond the heavens Job thought there lived a Kinsman, who saw all his sufferings, and pitied, and would one day appear on earth to vindicate his innocence and avenge his wrongs. He was content to leave the case with Him, sure He would not fail, as his friends had done." (Meyer)

ii. "It has occurred to me that, possibly, Job himself may not have known the full meaning of all that he said. Imagine the patriarch driven into a corner, badgered by his so-called friends, charged by them with all manner of evils until he is quite boiling over with indignation, and, at the same time, smarting under terrible bodily diseases and the dreadful losses which he has sustained; and, at last, he bursts out with this exclamation, 'I shall be vindicated one day; I am sure I shall. I know that my Vindicator liveth. I am sure that, there is One who will vindicate me; and if he never clears my name and reputation as long as I live, it will be done afterwards. There must be a just God, in heaven, who will see me righted; and even though worms devour my body until the last relic of it has passed away, I do verily believe that, somehow, in the far-off ages, I shall be vindicated.'" (Spurgeon)

i. Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: Though it shines as a flash of faith in a dark background of despair, this bold confidence of Job completely frustrated Satan's confidence that Job could be turned against God. His confidence and trust, blind as it was at the moment, was set upon the fact that he would one day **see** God for himself, a statement powerfully and poetically repeated for emphasis.

i. Anticipating the fulfillment of all this, no wonder Job could say, "**How my heart yearns within me!**" With this wonderful revelation and proclamation of his anticipated **Redeemer** he clearly, though probably unknowingly, looked forward to Jesus Christ and His work as **Redeemer**.

ii. This is entirely in keeping with other passages which refer to God as our **Redeemer**. "And if the places where God is called *Goel* in the Old Testament be examined, it will be found that either all or most of them may be, and some of them must be, understood of God the Son, or of Christ, as Gen 48:16; Isa 59:20." (Poole)

iii. Nevertheless, it is also significant that in this passage where Jesus is wonderfully celebrated as a living **Redeemer** and Vindicator and Kinsman for His people, we also see the shadow of the suffering of Jesus. "Job's language in Chapter 19 is full of haunting premonitions of Christ's crucifixion." (Mason)

- *[God] has surrounded me with His net (Job 19:6).*
- *He has set darkness in my paths (Job 19:8).*
- *He has stripped me of my glory (Job 19:9).*
- *He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone (Job 19:10).*
- *He has kindled His wrath against me, and He counts me as one of His enemies (Job 19:11).*
- *He has removed my brothers far from me (Job 19:13).*
- *My close friends have forgotten me (Job 19:14).*
- *Those whom I love have turned against me (Job 19:19).*

- *My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh (Job 19:20).*

iii. Adam Clarke described how he felt this remarkable revelation given to Job changed him, and gave him a different attitude that is evident in the rest of the Book of Job: "It is not at all probable that Job had this confidence any time before the moment in which he uttered it: it was then a *direct revelation*, nothing of which he ever had before, else he had never dropped those words of impatience and irritation which we find in several of his speeches. And this may be safely inferred from the consideration, that *after this time* no such words escaped his lips: He bears the rest of his sufferings with great patience and fortitude; and seems to look forward with steady hope to that day in which all tears shall be wiped away from all faces, and it is fully proved that the Judge of all the earth has done right." We could say that *seeing Jesus changed Job and transformed him in the midst of his suffering.*

j. **Be afraid of the sword for yourselves:** Full of spiritual confidence and faith, Job warned his friends regarding their own disbelief. They seemed to believe more in God as a system of belief rather than in a person, a person whom Job would see and who would one day vindicate him.

i. "Job's concluding words, addressed to the friends, sound like a warning that they, too, must face judgment. Unfortunately these verses are largely unintelligible, including verse 27c, which reads 'my kidneys have ended in my chest.'" (Andersen)

ii. "How intriguing it is that Job, even while his tragic circumstances have induced in him a fresh fear of God, never exhibits the least fear of God's judgment, and is actually eager to see it through." (Mason)

iii. Job was not afraid of judgment, because he was confident that the charges against him were false, and that his **Redeemer** would vindicate him. However, our **Redeemer** also clears us of our *true guilt*. "There is another most comforting thought – that our Vindicator will clear us from true charges as well as false ones. As for the false charges, what do they matter? It is the true ones that really concern us: can Christ clear us from them? Yes, that he can." (Spurgeon)

iv. "He has now given full vent to his anguish. He has clung for all that to his sense of innocence; and he has risen from his despair to a height from which he sees, for one brief moment, 'the land that is very far off,' the better shore that lies beyond the dark stream of death. And then, silent and exhausted, he has to listen once more to the voice of the third of his counselors." (Bradley)

Zophar Speaks: The Wicked Will Suffer

Job 20:1 (1-2) Job, you upset me. Now I'm impatient to answer.

Job 20:3 What you have said is an insult, but I know how to reply to you.

Job 20:4 Surely you know that from ancient times, when we humans were first placed on earth,

Job 20:5 no wicked people have been happy for long.

Job 20:6 They may grow great, towering to the sky, so great that their heads reach the clouds,

Job 20:7 but they will be blown away like dust. Those who used to know them will wonder where they have gone.

Job 20:8 They will vanish like a dream, like a vision at night, and never be seen again.

Job 20:9 The wicked will disappear from the place where they used to live;

Job 20:10 and their children will make good what they stole from the poor.

Job 20:11 Their bodies used to be young and vigorous, but soon they will turn to dust.

Job 20:12 (12-13) Evil tastes so good to them that they keep some in their mouths to enjoy its flavor.

Job 20:14 But in their stomachs the food turns bitter, as bitter as any poison could be.

Job 20:15 The wicked vomit up the wealth they stole; God takes it back, even out of their stomachs.

Job 20:16 What the evil people swallow is like poison; it kills them like the bite of a deadly snake.

Job 20:17 They will not live to see rivers of olive oil or streams that flow with milk and honey.

Job 20:18 They will have to give up all they have worked for; they will have no chance to enjoy their wealth,

Job 20:19 because they oppressed and neglected the poor and seized houses someone else had built.

Job 20:20 Their greed is never satisfied.

Job 20:21 When they eat, there is nothing left over, but now their prosperity comes to an end.

Job 20:22 At the height of their success all the weight of misery will crush them.

Job 20:23 Let them eat all they want! God will punish them in fury and anger.

Job 20:24 When they try to escape from an iron sword, a bronze bow will shoot them down.

Job 20:25 Arrows stick through their bodies; the shiny points drip with their blood, and terror grips their hearts.

Job 20:26 Everything they have saved is destroyed; a fire not lit by human hands burns them and all their family.

Job 20:27 Heaven reveals their sin, and the earth gives testimony against them.

Job 20:28 All their wealth will be destroyed in the flood of God's anger.

Job 20:29 This is the fate of wicked people, the fate that God assigns to them.

Job 20:1-29

Job 20 – Zophar Speaks a Second Time

A. Zophar answers Job.

1. (1-3) Zophar describes his turmoil.

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

**“Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me.**

**I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me,
And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.”**

a. **My anxious thoughts make me answer:** Zophar insisted that Job’s striking defense in the previous chapters made him **anxious** and caused **turmoil within** him. Job’s speech upset him.

i. “Zophar speaks with dignity, but dignity is not an indication of discernment. Zophar has listened to Job’s words but not to the spirit of them; he is ashamed of the attitude his former friend has taken.” (Chambers)

b. **I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me, and the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer:** Though wounded by Job’s tough response, Zophar claimed he would answer Job with **understanding**.

i. “Zophar therefore assumes his old ground, and retracts nothing of what he had said. Like many of his

own complexion in the present day, he was determined to believe that his judgment was infallible, and that *he* could not err." (Clarke)

ii. We can rightly question the spiritual understanding of Zophar's answer, but he certainly spoke with an understanding of poetry and literature. "The poem must be read with full attention given to the use of figurative language, parallelism, and strophic structure, all basic elements of Hebrew poetry. Despite the error of Zophar's application, the poem itself ought to be appreciated as a masterly piece of literature." (Smick)

2. (4-11) *The short triumph of the wicked man.*

**"Do you *not* know this of old,
Since man was placed on earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for a moment?
Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens,
And his head reaches to the clouds,
Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse;
Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'
He will fly away like a dream, and not be found;
Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.
The eye *that* saw him will see *him* no more,
Nor will his place behold him anymore.
His children will seek the favor of the poor,
And his hands will restore his wealth.
His bones are full of his youthful vigor,
But it will lie down with him in the dust."**

a. **Do you not know this of old:** Zophar here did what he and his friends had done on previous occasions; he made a claim to authority simply by saying, "We all know these things to be true," without *proving* the claim.

i. "Zophar had a strong conceit that Job was but a hypocrite, one that was wicked before God in heart, notwithstanding his fair pretences and professions of piety." (Trapp)

b. **The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment:** "Job, we all know this – that whatever good or triumph the wicked seem to enjoy, it is all quickly passing. It is only **for a moment**, and the wicked man **will perish forever like his own refuse.**"

i. **Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse:** "Zophar here hints his disbelief in that doctrine, the resurrection of the body, which Job had so solemnly asserted in the preceding chapter." (Clarke)

B. The misery of the wicked man.

1. (12-19) The frustrated life of the wicked man.

**"Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
And he hides it under his tongue,
Though he spares it and does not forsake it,
But still keeps it in his mouth,
Yet his food in his stomach turns sour;
It becomes cobra venom within him.
He swallows down riches
And vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.
He will suck the poison of cobras;
The viper's tongue will slay him.
He will not see the streams,
The rivers flowing with honey and cream.
He will restore that for which he labored,
And will not swallow *it* down;
From the proceeds of business
He will get no enjoyment.
For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor,**

He has violently seized a house which he did not build."

a. **Though evil is sweet in his mouth... Yet his food in his stomach turns sour:** Zophar argued that though the wicked man might enjoy things for a while, God surely brings His judgment against him so that all can see. What is **sweet** today for the wicked man will soon become **sour**.

i. "The evil man's wicked deeds, especially his robbing the poor, are tasty food that pleases his palate but turns sour in his stomach." (Smick)

ii. Here, he implied a painful and aggressive application. He would insist that *Job* was this wicked man, and his previous blessing and prosperity in life was only the **sweet** that has now turned **sour**.

iii. Trapp on **he swallows down riches:** "As wild beasts do their prey, as the greater fishes do the lesser, greedily, easily, suddenly, irrecoverably, as the fire swalloweth up the fuel, as the lean kine devoured the fat, and as the Pamphagus glutton doth his tid-bits, his sweet morsels."

iv. Trapp on **God casts them out of his belly:** "Thus God will rake out of his belly, so that piece of his heart shall go with it. In the last destruction of Jerusalem some of the Jews had swallowed their gold, that the Roman soldiers might not have it; this was found out, and thereupon thousands of them were killed and ripped up for the gold that might be found in their stomachs and bowels. In like sort shall God deal with those covetous."

b. **For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor:** Here, Zophar described what he thought was the sinful

conduct of the wicked man, and why he deserved to be frustrated in life. Clearly, he implied that this was Job.

2. (20-29) *The dark destiny of the wicked man.*

**“Because he knows no quietness in his heart,
He will not save anything he desires.
Nothing is left for him to eat;
Therefore his well-being will not last.
In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress;
Every hand of misery will come against him.
When he is about to fill his stomach,
God will cast on him the fury of His wrath,
And will rain *it* on him while he is eating.
He will flee from the iron weapon;
A bronze bow will pierce him through.
It is drawn, and comes out of the body;
Yes, the glittering *point* comes out of his gall.
Terrors *come* upon him;
Total darkness *is* reserved for his treasures.
An unfanned fire will consume him;
It shall go ill with him who is left in his tent.
The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.
The increase of his house will depart,
And *his goods* will flow away in the day of His wrath.
This *is* the portion from God for a wicked man,
The heritage appointed to him by God.”**

a. **In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress:**
Zophar thought that the reason Job was in such agony and **distress** was because of his own **self-sufficiency**; this explained his great **misery**.

i. **There is nothing left for him to eat... God will cast him on the fury of His wrath:** “When a wicked man’s belly is filled and there is nothing left for him to

devour, God then vents his anger against him.”
(Smick)

b. He will flee from the iron weapon; a bronze bow will pierce him through: Zophar claimed that the wicked could not escape from their destiny of judgment. If they escaped the **iron weapon**, then **a bronze bow** was waiting for them.

i. **An unfanned fire:** “To wit, by man, but kindled by God himself.” (Poole)

c. It is drawn, and comes out of the body: Here, Zophar saw the wicked man pierced by the arrows of God’s judgment. He took the complaint of Job of being pierced by God’s arrows (Job 6:4; Job 7:20) and turned it back upon Job, claiming that Job *deserved* this as a wicked man.

i. Job’s friends did not seem to regard him as a wicked man when they first came to him (Job 2:11-13). One might say that Job virtually provoked this judgment from them, in that they simply tried to help Job see that he was a sinner who needed to repent, and when Job absolutely refused to agree with them, they came to regard him as a stubborn and wicked man.

ii. Once they regarded him as this, they quickly hardened in their estimation of Job: “All cries and appeals on the part of Job are, in his friends, eyes, mere proofs that he refuses to read aright the universal law as revealed in the experience of life... The images that they put before him grow darker and darker.” (Bradley)

d. The heavens will reveal his iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him. The increase of his house will depart, and his goods will flow away in the day of His wrath: Zophar seems to describe Job’s

losses, and he therefore made the clear connection that *Job was the stubborn, wicked man who deserved this judgment from God.*

i. The phrase “**and his goods will flow away**” is revealing, showing that Zophar focused almost entirely on the *material* aspect of Job’s troubles, and virtually ignored the spiritual dynamic. “He sees the carrying off of ‘possessions’ (Job 20:28) as a judgment. The loss of fellowship with God, in this life or after it, does not strike him as a far worse fate. Yet it is precisely this loss that fills Job’s mind with horror, and this need that arouses his most desperate longings.” (Andersen)

e. **This is the portion from God for a wicked man, the heritage appointed to him by God:** This was Zophar’s firm conclusion (he speaks no more in the Book of Job). He made the clear connection between the wrath that the wicked man reaps and Job’s own situation.

i. “These closing words were in the nature of a summary of all he had been saying. The sufferings he had described were such as fell to the wicked, and that by Divine appointment. All this was true. But other things were true, of which he seemed to have no knowledge... The narrowness of Zophar’s philosophy made him unjust to Job.” (Morgan)

ii. Significantly, *Zophar was mostly correct*. It is true that there is a moral order to the universe and that wickedness is inherently unprofitable, and it is cursed and judged by God. Morgan rightly observed: “In a passage thrilling with passion, he described the instability of evil gains. There is triumph, but it is short. There is a mounting up, but it is succeeded by swift vanishing. There is a sense of youth, but it becomes dust. There is a sweetness, but it becomes

remorse; a swallowing down which ends in vomiting; a getting without rejoicing."

Yet that true general principle did not apply to Job's specific situation.

iii. Zophar – as with the rest of Job's friends – also left little room for *grace*. "It is worth pointing out, as a sign of the narrowness of Zophar's beliefs, that his speech contains no hint that the wicked might repent, make amends, and regain the favour of God. Zophar has no compassion and his god has no mercy." (Andersen)

Job Replies: The Wicked Do Prosper

Job 21:1 (1-2) Listen to what I am saying; that is all the comfort I ask from you.

Job 21:3 Give me a chance to speak and then, when I am through, sneer if you like.

Job 21:4 My quarrel is not with mortals; I have good reason to be impatient.

Job 21:5 Look at me. Isn't that enough to make you stare in shocked silence?

Job 21:6 When I think of what has happened to me, I am stunned, and I tremble and shake.

Job 21:7 Why does God let evil people live, let them grow old and prosper?

Job 21:8 They have children and grandchildren, and live to watch them all grow up.

Job 21:9 God does not bring disaster on their homes; they never have to live in terror.

Job 21:10 Yes, all their cattle breed and give birth without trouble.

Job 21:11 Their children run and play like lambs

Job 21:12 and dance to the music of harps and flutes.

Job 21:13 They live out their lives in peace and quietly die without suffering.

Job 21:14 The wicked tell God to leave them alone; they don't want to know his will for their lives.

Job 21:15 They think there is no need to serve God nor any advantage in praying to him.

Job 21:16 They claim they succeed by their own strength, but their way of thinking I can't accept.

Job 21:17 Was a wicked person's light ever put out? Did one of them ever meet with disaster? Did God ever punish the wicked in anger

Job 21:18 and blow them away like straw in the wind, or like dust carried away in a storm?

Job 21:19 You claim God punishes a child for the sins of his father. No! Let God punish the sinners themselves; let him show that he does it because of *their* sins.

Job 21:20 Let sinners bear their own punishment; let them feel the wrath of Almighty God.

Job 21:21 When our lives are over, do we really care whether our children are happy?

Job 21:22 Can anyone teach God, who judges even those in high places?

Job 21:23 (23-24) Some people stay healthy till the day they die; they die happy and at ease, their bodies well-nourished.

Job 21:25 Others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts.

Job 21:26 But all alike die and are buried; they all are covered with worms.

Job 21:27 I know what spiteful thoughts you have.

Job 21:28 You ask, "Where are the homes of great people now, those who practiced evil?"

Job 21:29 Haven't you talked with people who travel? Don't you know the reports they bring back?

Job 21:30 On the day God is angry and punishes, it is the wicked who are always spared.

Job 21:31 There is no one to accuse the wicked or pay them back for all they have done.

Job 21:32 When they are carried to the graveyard, to their well-guarded tombs,

Job 21:33 thousands join the funeral procession, and even the earth lies gently on their bodies.

Job 21:34 And you! You try to comfort me with nonsense! Every answer you give is a lie!

Job 21:1-34

Job 21 – Job Answers Zophar’s Discourse

A. The problem of the prosperity of the wicked.

1. (1-3) Job’s opening plea.

Then Job answered and said:

“Listen carefully to my speech,

And let this be your consolation.

Bear with me that I may speak,

And after I have spoken, keep mocking.”

a. **Listen carefully to my speech:** Because of the way Job’s friends kept repeating themselves and their arguments to him, it was easy for Job to feel that they simply were not listening to him.

i. Instead, Job wanted to prove that he had been listening to *them*. “In this closing speech of the second cycle, Job was determined to prove that he had listened to what his counselors had said. This he did by quoting or otherwise alluding to their words and refuting them. Compare 20:11 with 21:7, 18:19 with 21:8, 18:5 with 21:17, 5:4 and 20:10 with 21:19, and 20:4 with 21:29.” (Smick)

b. **After I have spoken, keep mocking:** This indicates that Job's hardness towards his friends has not lessened at all; nor has their hardness towards him. They speak with sharp and sarcastic words to each other.

2. (4-16) *Considering the prosperity of the wicked.*

**"As for me, *is* my complaint against man?
And if *it were*, why should I not be impatient?
Look at me and be astonished;
Put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
Even when I remember I am terrified,
And trembling takes hold of my flesh.
Why do the wicked live *and* become old,
Yes, become mighty in power?
Their descendants are established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their houses *are* safe from fear,
Neither *is* the rod of God upon them.
Their bull breeds without failure;
Their cow calves without miscarriage.
They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance.
They sing to the tambourine and harp,
And rejoice to the sound of the flute.
They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.
Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us,
For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.
Who *is* the Almighty, that we should serve Him?
And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'
Indeed their prosperity *is* not in their hand;
The counsel of the wicked is far from me."**

a. **Is my complaint against man:** This demonstrates again that Job's real point of crisis was his conflict with

God, not with man (especially with his friends). His crisis was fundamentally *spiritual* in nature, much more than being a medical crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis, or a family crisis. His struggle was against God, and he wondered where God was in the midst of this very dark time.

b. **Look at me and be astonished:** Thus far, Job's friends looked at him and mostly accused and condemned him. He wanted them to take a step back (as it were) and **be astonished** at what had happened to this good and godly man.

c. **Why do the wicked live and become old:** Job challenged the moral order of the universe as previously understood by his friends. He challenged them to see that if it was possible for a **wicked** man to be seemingly blessed, then perhaps also a righteous man like Job could seem to be cursed.

i. Zophar said that the wicked die prematurely (Job 20:4-11); Job insisted that instead, **the wicked live and become old**.

ii. "Of some creatures we used to say, that they have nine lives; of some wicked men it may be thought so, they do evil a hundred times, and yet their days are prolonged. Manasseh reigned longest of any king in Judah. Pope John XXII (that monster and mortalist) lived longest of any pope, and died richest. God gives wealth, health, and long life to many wicked." (Trapp)

d. **Their descendants are established with them in their sight:** In this and the following verses, Job explains many of the blessings that seem to come to many of the wicked, even as they reject God (**Yet they say to God, "Depart from us"**).

i. Bildad said that the wicked have no offspring or descendants to remember them (Job 18:19-21); Job countered that **their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring are before their eyes.**

ii. "We see, beneath the Eastern imagery, the picture of the prosperous and powerful family in all lands and ages, founded in violence, or by fraud and wrong. '*They* do not see their children die,' says the childless parent. '*They* are stretched upon no rack of lingering pain,' says the tortured leper." (Bradley)

iii. It is impossible to miss the contrast here. All the advantages that many of the wicked seemed to have, Job was deprived of.

- Job is the man whose **descendants** were cursed and not **established**.
- Job is the man whose house was subject to fear.
- Job is the man with the **rod of God** upon him.
- Job is the man whose livestock has perished.
- Job is the man whose **children** no longer **dance**.

iv. "Job was disturbed by the apparent injustice of it all. As noted the Book of Job does not deal with the matter of final future judgment that would set right the tables of justice. Such revelation will come later. Job, therefore, felt that immediate punishment for the wicked would be the only just procedure; but he found just the opposite in life." (Smick)

v. **Depart from us:** "This is the language of their *conduct*, though not directly of their *lips*... Let us alone; we do not trouble thee. Thy ways are painful; we do not like cross-bearing. Thy ways are spiritual;

we wish to live after the flesh. We have learned to do our own will; we do not wish to study thine.” (Clarke)

B. The wisdom of God and the prosperity of the wicked.

1. (17-21) God allows the wicked to prosper, at least in his own day.

**“How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?
How often does their destruction come upon them,
The sorrows God distributes in His anger?
They are like straw before the wind,
And like chaff that a storm carries away.
They say, ‘God lays up one’s iniquity for his children’;
Let Him recompense him, that he may know *it*.
Let his eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
For what does he care about his household after him,
When the number of his months is cut in half?”**

a. **How often is the lamp of the wicked put out:** In Job’s rhetorical question he would answer, “Not **often** enough.” And it would do Job no satisfaction to hear that the judgment would instead come upon the wicked man’s descendants.

i. “If punishment is delayed, the friends can fall back another step and say that the children will pay for their fathers’ sins (Job 5:4; Job 20:10). Job considers this to be monstrous, encouraging a further depravity: ‘We can sin; our children will pay!’” (Andersen)

b. **Let his eyes see his destruction:** In thinking upon the seeming comfort of the wicked, Job almost despaired. He cried out to God to bring **destruction** upon the wicked in his own day, and not in the time of **his household after him**.

i. Job acknowledged that wickedness was never ultimately rewarded and was always punished in the end. The problem for Job was that it never seemed soon enough that the wicked would **drink of the wrath of the Almighty**. Job suffered in the *now*, and many of the wicked did not.

ii. **Let him drink of the wrath:** "The cup of God's wrath, the cup of trembling, etc., is frequently expressed or referred to in the sacred writings, Deu 32:33; Isa 51:17-22; Jer 25:15; Rev 14:8. It appears to be a metaphor taken from those cups of poison which certain criminals were obliged to drink." (Clarke)

2. (22-26) *God is all wise, yet the wicked sometimes prosper and the godly sometimes suffer.*

**"Can anyone teach God knowledge,
Since He judges those on high?
One dies in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and secure;
His pails are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moist.
Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul,
Never having eaten with pleasure.
They lie down alike in the dust,
And worms cover them."**

a. **Can anyone teach God knowledge:** In the broader context, Job is indeed questioning the ways and wisdom of God in not bringing judgment sooner upon the wicked man. At the same time, he sensed that this was wrong, so he corrected himself with his own rhetorical question on this point.

i. "God is pleased to do wonderful contradictory things in man's reason; so that we must needs confess an

unsearchableness in his ways... In this work of his, human reason is blinder than a mole." (Trapp)

ii. The King James Version translates Job 21:24 as, *His breasts are full of milk*. Upon this, Poole notes: "*His breasts*: the Hebrew word is not elsewhere used, and therefore it is diversely translated; either 1. *Breasts*. But that seems very improper here, because men's breasts are not used to be filled with milk. Or, 2. *Milk-pails*. But their fullness is common, and no sign of eminent plenty, which is here designated."

b. One dies in his full strength... another man dies in the bitterness of his soul... they lie down alike in the dust: Job is clearly uncomfortable in questioning the ways and wisdom of God, yet at the same time it just seemed so unfair that the good and bad would seemingly have the same fate.

i. "All these worldly differences are ended by death, and they lie in the grave without any distinction... So that no man can tell who is good, and who is bad, by any events which befall them in this life." (Poole)

ii. Job is agonizing over these questions, but he is actually agonizing in a good way. "God would rather have us complain than be indifferent toward him or to handle his truths arrogantly and so reduce them to dead maxims. Job's anguish over not understanding what God was doing is proof that he was not indifferent or arrogant." (Smick)

3. (27-34) *Job challenges the empty words of his friends.*

**"Look, I know your thoughts,
And the schemes *with which* you would wrong me.
For you say, 'Where *is* the house of the prince?
And where *is* the tent,
The dwelling place of the wicked?'**

**Have you not asked those who travel the road?
And do you not know their signs?
For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.
Who condemns his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb.
The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;
Everyone shall follow him,
As countless *have gone* before him.
How then can you comfort me with empty words,
Since falsehood remains in your answers?"**

a. **Look, I know your thoughts:** As Job dared to question God in this way, he could see the reaction on the faces of his three friends. They were appalled that he spoke against God and His justice so.

i. Both Job and his friends didn't understand God's ways. Yet there were two significant differences between Job and his friends. First, his friends confidently claimed that they did understand, while Job admitted his perplexity. Second, for Job's friends, these were matters of theological and moral theory and interesting topics for discussion; for the severely suffering Job, these were life-and-death questions.

b. **Where is the house of the prince? And where is the tent, the dwelling place of the wicked:** Job put these words of objection into the mouths of his friends. They thought it was all so simple to analyze; one needed only to look at the **house of the prince** and the **tent... of the wicked** to see that righteousness was rewarded and wickedness was punished by God's moral order. Yet Job has tried to show that the matter just isn't that simple.

i. "He was saying that it is impossible to derive a just law of retribution from what we observe in this present world." (Smick)

c. Have you not asked those who travel the road?...

For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom:

Job knew that the wicked faced an ultimate unpleasant destiny; he was more upset that it didn't seem to happen fast enough. He believed this knowledge was so common that one could ask **those who travel the road** and get the correct answer.

d. **Who condemns his way to his face:** The ultimate destiny for the wicked may be bad, but who will confront him now? Why does he get away with so much now? There may be an ultimate moral order to the universe, but why is it so slow in being accomplished?

e. He shall be brought to the grave, and a vigil kept over his tomb... the clods of the valley shall be sweet to him:

Job understood that the wicked would indeed die; but many of the wicked enjoy honorable funerals and even their death is a kind of sweetness to them. It all just didn't seem fair.

i. "Contrary to the description of the wicked in Job chapters 8 and 20, the ungodly man is often buried with the highest honors." (Smick)

f. How then can you comfort me with empty words:

The complexity of Job's situation was far beyond the ability of his friends to properly analyze. They had no **comfort** for him with their **empty** words and their false **answers**.

i. "If in his friends' arguments there was no comfort for him, it is equally true that in his answers he brought no conviction to them. All this is strangely suggestive. Men discussing human life are almost

certain to blunder when they attempt to explain it.”
(Morgan)

ii. “This chapter may be called Job’s triumph over the insinuated calumnies, and specious but false doctrines, of his opponents. The irritability of his temper no longer appears: from the time he got that glorious discovery of his *Redeemer*, and the joyous hope of an *eternal inheritance*, Job 19:25, etc., we find no more murmurings, nor unsanctified complainings. He is now full master of himself, and reasons conclusively, because he reasons coolly.”
(Clarke)

Eliphaz Speaks: Job's Wickedness Is Great

Job 22:1 (1-2) Is there anyone, even the wisest, who could ever be of use to God?

Job 22:3 Does your doing right benefit God, or does your being good help him at all?

Job 22:4 It is not because you stand in awe of God that he reprimands you and brings you to trial.

Job 22:5 No, it's because you have sinned so much; it's because of all the evil you do.

Job 22:6 To make a brother repay you the money he owed, you took away his clothes and left him nothing to wear.

Job 22:7 You refused water to those who were tired, and refused to feed those who were hungry.

Job 22:8 You used your power and your position to take over the whole land.

Job 22:9 You not only refused to help widows, but you also robbed and mistreated orphans.

Job 22:10 So now there are pitfalls all around you, and suddenly you are full of fear.

Job 22:11 It has grown so dark that you cannot see, and a flood overwhelms you.

Job 22:12 Doesn't God live in the highest heavens and look down on the stars, even though they are high?

Job 22:13 And yet you ask, "What does God know? He is hidden by clouds—how can he judge us?"

Job 22:14 You think the thick clouds keep him from seeing, as he walks on the dome of the sky.

Job 22:15 Are you determined to walk in the paths that evil people have always followed?

Job 22:16 Even before their time had come, they were washed away by a flood.

Job 22:17 These are the ones who rejected God and believed that he could do nothing to them.

Job 22:18 And yet it was God who made them prosperous—I can't understand the thoughts of the wicked.

Job 22:19 Good people are glad and the innocent laugh when they see the wicked punished.

Job 22:20 All that the wicked own is destroyed, and fire burns up anything that is left.

Job 22:21 Now, Job, make peace with God and stop treating him like an enemy; if you do, then he will bless you.

Job 22:22 Accept the teaching he gives; keep his words in your heart.

Job 22:23 Yes, you must humbly return to God and put an end to all the evil that is done in your house.

Job 22:24 Throw away your gold; dump your finest gold in the dry stream bed.

Job 22:25 Let Almighty God be your gold, and let him be silver, piled high for you.

Job 22:26 Then you will always trust in God and find that he is the source of your joy.

Job 22:27 When you pray, he will answer you, and you will keep the vows you made.

Job 22:28 You will succeed in all you do, and light will shine on your path.

Job 22:29 God brings down the proud and saves the humble.

Job 22:30 He will rescue you if you are innocent, if what you do is right.

Job 22:1-30

Job 22 – Eliphaz Speaks a Last Time

This begins a third (and shortened) round of debate between Job and his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Through these three rounds, "A certain movement can be detected. In the first cycle the friends are content to talk generalities, without venturing to apply their doctrine directly to Job. In the second round the main theme is the fate of the wicked and Job's point of view comes into open contradiction with that of his friends... Now it comes into the open and the breach between them is complete. Once this point is reached there can be no further dialogue, and the discussion grinds to a halt." (Andersen)

A. Eliphaz attacks Job's character.

1. (1-3) Eliphaz asks: "What good are you to God?"

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

"Can a man be profitable to God,

Though he who is wise may be profitable to himself?

Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous?

Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?"

a. **Can a man be profitable to God, though he who is wise may be profitable to himself:** Eliphaz heard all of Job's anguished outpourings to God, and seemed to think that Job simply thought too highly of himself. He

wondered why Job thought he was so special, so **profitable** to God, and why he thought God owed him so much.

i. "It is the now familiar unbalanced stress on divine transcendence: the concept that man is nothing in God's eyes, even his virtue is useless. God does not need man; it is man who needs God. Since everything has its origin in God, man's giving it back – even in service – does not enhance God in any way." (Smick)

ii. "Is he not simply arguing the case for the self-sufficiency of God? God needs nothing; God lacks nothing. Since God is already absolutely perfect, He did not create man out of any personal deficiency or compulsion, and therefore man cannot give anything to God. This is standard orthodox doctrine." (Mason)

b. **Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous:** Eliphaz thought Job was arrogant, and believed himself to be a special favorite to God because (he thought that) he was so righteous. He wanted Job to consider that God needed nothing from him, and Job added nothing to God.

i. In one aspect, Eliphaz certainly had correct theology; God does not "need" Job in the way Job needs God. Nevertheless, Eliphaz's application of this principle was wrong in this context, because *it was indeed a **pleasure to the Almighty that Job was righteous*** (as seen in Job 1-2). According to those first two chapters, it was indeed a **gain to Him that Job made his ways blameless**.

ii. Earlier (as recorded in Job 11), Zophar objected to Job's complaint on what one might today call the grounds of Calvinistic or Reformed theology. Here, Eliphaz took up an argument upon similar lines. It was as if he said, "Job, God is sovereign and self-

existent. He *needs* nothing of you and owes you absolutely nothing. God takes no **pleasure** in your imperfect righteousness and it is no **gain** to Him that you are considered blameless." Though there is certainly some merit in this theology, *it does not apply to every context and it did not apply to Job in his context.*

2. (4-11) Eliphaz describes Job's great wickedness.

**"Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you,
And enters into judgment with you?
Is not your wickedness great,
And your iniquity without end?
For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
You have not given the weary water to drink,
And you have withheld bread from the hungry.
But the mighty man possessed the land,
And the honorable man dwelt in it.
You have sent widows away empty,
And the strength of the fatherless was crushed.
Therefore snares *are* all around you,
And sudden fear troubles you,
Or darkness *so that* you cannot see;
And an abundance of water covers you."**

a. **Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you:** Eliphaz pressed the point home to Job. Surely, the catastrophe that came upon Job (which Eliphaz lightly called "correction") did not come because Job feared God; it came because Job's **wickedness** was **great** and his **iniquity** was **without end**.

i. "He no longer believed that Job was basically a God-fearing man. Job's troubles were God's rebuke. That

they were great testified to the extent of his sin. So Eliphaz felt free, perhaps obligated, to expound on the possible nature of those sins.” (Smick)

ii. What Eliphaz did not, and seemingly could not consider, was that Job’s crisis had nothing to do with correction; it had nothing to do with the Almighty entering **into judgment with** Job. Because he could not see the heavenly drama that took place in Job Chapters 1 and 2, Eliphaz *simply could not conceive of other reasons.*

b. For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason, and stripped the naked of their clothing: This begins a remarkable list of groundless accusations against Job. He accused Job mainly of greed and cruelty for the sake of riches. None of this was true, but Eliphaz assumed it was because Job was once rich and was now beset by such tragedy. The only evidence he could offer was Job’s condition, and he could not think of another possible explanation for Job’s crisis.

i. “They were the most dastardly sins possible to a man of wealth and position: those of the spoliation of the poor, neglect of the starving, the oppression of the helpless.” (Morgan)

ii. **The mighty man:** Literally, “*the man of arm*. Finger, hand, and arm, are all emblems of strength and power. *The man of arm* is not only the *strong man*, but the *man of power and influence*, the man of *rapine* and *plunder*.” (Clarke)

c. Therefore snares are all around you, and sudden fear troubles you: Eliphaz again stated this simple formula that dominated the analyses of Job’s friends.

B. Eliphaz attacks Job’s theology.

1. (12-20) A contrast between the wicked and the righteous.

**"Is not God in the height of heaven?
And see the highest stars, how lofty they are!
And you say, 'What does God know?
Can He judge through the deep darkness?
Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see,
And He walks above the circle of heaven.'
Will you keep to the old way
Which wicked men have trod,
Who were cut down before their time,
Whose foundations were swept away by a flood?
They said to God, 'Depart from us!
What can the Almighty do to them?'
Yet He filled their houses with good *things*;
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me."**

**"The righteous see *it* and are glad,
And the innocent laugh at them:
'Surely our adversaries are cut down,
And the fire consumes their remnant.'"**

a. **Is not God in the height of heaven:** Here, Eliphaz instructed Job in the basics of theology. He thought that because Job would not admit his error, he must be fundamentally wrong in his understanding of God. So he begins with the basic idea of the might, majesty, and sovereignty of God.

b. **Will you keep to the old way which wicked men have trod:** Eliphaz warned Job to not harden his heart and mind as those did who were **swept away by a flood**. This is possibly an obscure reference to the **flood** in Noah's time, and Eliphaz warned Job to not follow in the wickedness of those antedelluvian people.

i. "Sarcastically, he asks Job if he plans to continue going in the wrong direction – along the path of the

wicked. He says this same path that Job is now traveling led to the drowning of an entire generation in Noah's day 'by a river,' a reference to the Flood." (Lawson)

ii. John Trapp suggested another idea: "This some understand of that river of brimstone and fire poured from heaven upon Sodom and her sisters; but better take it of those in Noah's days."

iii. "The oft-used images of *darkness* and *flood of water* are also applied to Job, for these are the best examples of God's judgment, even though they do not match the events of chapters 1 and 2." (Andersen)

c. **The righteous see it and are glad:** In contrast to the previously mentioned **wicked men**, the righteous are happy for the judgments of God. This was another way for Eliphaz to say that Job was wicked and not righteous, because he did not rejoice in the judgments of God.

2. (21-30) *Eliphaz counsels Job to make himself right with God.*

**"Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace;
Thereby good will come to you.**

**Receive, please, instruction from His mouth,
And lay up His words in your heart.**

**If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up;
You will remove iniquity far from your tents.**

**Then you will lay your gold in the dust,
And the *gold* of Ophir among the stones of the
brooks.**

**Yes, the Almighty will be your gold
And your precious silver;**

**For then you will have your delight in the Almighty,
And lift up your face to God.**

**You will make your prayer to Him,
He will hear you,
And you will pay your vows.
You will also declare a thing,
And it will be established for you;
So light will shine on your ways.
When they cast *you* down, and you say, 'Exaltation
will come!'
Then He will save the humble *person*.
He will *even* deliver one who is not innocent;
Yes, he will be delivered by the purity of your hands."**

a. **Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you:** This was great advice for Job, *assuming that the problem was sin in Job's life*. Yet we know (on the basis of Job 1-2) that this assumption was wrong, and therefore the advice was wrong.

i. "These words introduce a most exquisite picture of the blessings consequent on return to God. They do not fit the case of Job, to whom they were addressed, because he had not left God; and they sound strange coming from the mouth of Eliphaz. Still they are full of sublime truth." (Meyer)

ii. We can say that Eliphaz was right about the need of man to **acquaint** himself with God. "What a man needs in order to be blessed himself, and to be a blessing to others, is knowledge of God... In Him there shall be delight: with Him communion: and through Him triumph. Moreover the result will be ability to deliver others." (Morgan)

b.

For then you will have your delight in the Almighty: Eliphaz assumed much, because Job was agonizing with God instead of finding **delight** in Him.

Job's agony with God was a real, though temporary phenomenon.

i. *"To the Almighty; or, home to the Almighty; or, so as to reach the Almighty and be joined to him. The Hebrew phrase is extraordinary, and emphatical, and implies a thorough and effectual turning not only from sin... but also unto God, so as to love him, and cleave to him."* (Poole)

ii. **And lift up your face to God:** In a sermon titled *Delight in the Almighty*, Charles Spurgeon explained what this means.

- It means to have *joy in God*. "When a man hangs his head down he is unhappy: it is the attitude of misery; but oh, when our thoughts of God are changed, and our relationship to God is different, we lift up our faces and sun our countenances in the light of God's favor."

- It means to have *guilt* put away. "Guilt makes a man hang his head. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all"; but oh, my brothers, when the atoning sacrifice has come with all its power to us, when we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and we are clean every whit, then we lift up our face unto God."

- It means to be free from *fear*. "Fear covers her face, and would fain hide herself altogether, even though to accomplish concealment the rocks must fall upon her."

- It means to have *expectation*. "Oh, to lift one's face toward God, looking for deliverance, safety, and rest, and expecting both grace and glory from his right hand!"

c. **So light will shine on your ways... He will save the humble person:** For Eliphaz and his friends, the

equation was rather simple. All Job needed to do was to confess the deep and great sins that had brought this calamity upon his life, and then receive God's restoration.

i. "It is a tribute to his own spirituality that, whereas in Job 5:17-26 he had emphasized the material advantages of religion, here intimacy with God and success in prayer are of chief importance. While it is hurtful to remember that Job has already made these his supreme values, the irony will be felt at the end when Eliphaz will be the chief beneficiary of Job's power as an intercessor (Job 42:8)." (Andersen)

ii. "Great and wonderful words are these. Had Eliphaz applied them to himself he would have found that his own imperfect acquaintance with God was the reason why he was not able to bring any real comfort to his suffering friend." (Morgan)

iii. "Thus ends Eliphaz the Temanite, who began with a tissue of the bitterest charges, continued with the most cruel insinuations, and ended with commonplace exhortations to repentance, and promises of secular blessings in consequence." (Clarke)

Job Replies: Where Is God?

Job 23:1 (1-2) I still rebel and complain against God; I cannot keep from groaning.

Job 23:3 How I wish I knew where to find him, and knew how to go where he is.

Job 23:4 I would state my case before him and present all the arguments in my favor.

Job 23:5 I want to know what he would say and how he would answer me.

Job 23:6 Would God use all his strength against me? No, he would listen as I spoke.

Job 23:7 I am honest; I could reason with God; he would declare me innocent once and for all.

Job 23:8 I have searched in the East, but God is not there; I have not found him when I searched in the West.

Job 23:9 God has been at work in the North and the South, but still I have not seen him.

Job 23:10 Yet God knows every step I take; if he tests me, he will find me pure.

Job 23:11 I follow faithfully the road he chooses, and never wander to either side.

Job 23:12 I always do what God commands; I follow his will, not my own desires.

Job 23:13 He never changes. No one can oppose him or stop him from doing what he wants to do.

Job 23:14 He will fulfill what he has planned for me; that plan is just one of the many he has;

Job 23:15 I tremble with fear before him.

Job 23:16 (16-17) Almighty God has destroyed my courage. It is God, not the dark, that makes me afraid—even though the darkness has made me blind.

Job 23:1-17

Job 23 – Job’s Desire to Appear Before God

A. Job longs to take his case to God.

1. (1-7) Job’s bitter complaint and his inability to connect with God.

Then Job answered and said:

“Even today my complaint is bitter;

My hand is listless because of my groaning.

Oh, that I knew where I might find Him,

***That* I might come to His seat!**

I would present *my* case before Him,

And fill my mouth with arguments.

**I would know the words *which* He would answer me,
And understand what He would say to me.
Would He contend with me in His great power?
No! But He would take *note* of me.
There the upright could reason with Him,
And I would be delivered forever from my Judge."**

a. **Even today my complaint is bitter:** At the close of Eliphaz's speech, Job continued to feel desperate. The wisdom and counsel of Eliphaz and the others was of no relief to him, and just made his mental and spiritual agony worse.

b. **Oh, that I knew where I might find Him:** Job felt separated from God. Surely, this was not the first crisis in his life (though, of course, it was far beyond any previous suffering). He had found comfort and solace in God in prior times, but in this catastrophe he felt he could not **find** God.

i. In a way almost infinitely less, yet nevertheless real, Job experienced what Jesus experienced on the cross: A man who had previously been in the fellowship and favor of God, now felt utterly forsaken. This was the greatest source of torment in Job's life.

ii. This not only tells us of Job's sense of the loss of the presence of God, but of his longing to have it back. "Good men are washed towards God even by the rough waves of their grief; and when their sorrows are deepest, their highest desire is not to escape from them, but to get at their God." (Spurgeon)

iii. "In Job's uttermost extremity he cried after the Lord. The longing desire of an afflicted child of God is once more to see his Father's face. His first prayer is not, 'Oh that I might be healed of the disease which now festers in every part of my body!' nor even, 'Oh

that I might see my children restored from the jaws of the grave, and my property once more brought from the hand of the spoiler!’ but the first and uppermost cry is, ‘Oh that I knew where I might find HIM — who is my God! that I might come even to his seat!’” (Spurgeon)

c. **I would present my case before Him:** Job did not only want the sense of the presence of God for the sake of spiritual comfort; he also wanted it so he might be vindicated in the court of God, especially in the face of the accusations of his friends.

i. “So impatient is Job for the process to begin that he dares to arraign the Lord in court. In effect, he wants to sue God for defamation of character!” (Mason)

ii. “Here Job’s courageous honesty is seen at its best. His consuming desire is to come face to face with God, not by a contrived penance, as Eliphaz recommends, but in fair trial.” (Andersen)

d. **I would know the words which He would answer me... I would be delivered forever from my Judge:** Job’s conscience assured him that he would find mercy and favor at the throne of God. His friends insisted that God was *against* Job in his sufferings, but Job stubbornly clung to his innocence.

i. “He has confidence in the Lord that, if he could have an audience with him, God would not use his power against him; but, on the contrary, would strengthen him in order that he might state his case.” (Spurgeon)

2. (8-9) *Job confesses his lack of understanding and need of divine revelation.*

**“Look, I go forward, but He is not *there*,
And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;
When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold**

Him;

When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see *Him*.

a. **I go forward... backward... left hand... right hand:** Job insisted that he had sought God in the midst of his crisis. He looked in every direction he could.

i. "This is one of the marks of a true child of God, – that, even when God smites him, he still longs for his presence." (Spurgeon)

ii. "An old Puritan writer quaintly observed, in commenting on this, 'Job, you have gone forward and backward, and you have looked to the left and you have looked to the right. Why don't you try looking up?'" (Morgan)

iii. "These two verses paint in vivid colours the distress and anxiety of a soul in search of the favour of God. No *means* are left *untried*, no *place unexplored*, in order to find the object of his research. This is a true description of the conduct of a genuine penitent." (Clarke)

b. **But He is not there... I cannot perceive Him:** No matter how sincerely and how diligently Job looked, he could not find God. God remained hidden through a barrier that was impossible to pierce.

B. Job's confidence in the midst of despair.

1. (10-12) Job's confidence in God and in his own integrity.

But He knows the way that I take;

When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot has held fast to His steps;

I have kept His way and not turned aside.

I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;

I have treasured the words of His mouth

More than my necessary *food*."

a. **He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold:** Here is another bright flash of faith upon a generally black background. Job admitted that he could not get through to God, yet clung to the confidence that God was still over this crisis.

i. With wonderful faith, Job seemed at this fleeting instant to understand what he could and should in his present crisis. He understood that:

- God still observed Job carefully and had not forgotten him (**He knows the way that I take**).
- God had a purpose in the crisis, and the purpose was not to punish Job (**when He has tested me**).
- God would one day bring the trial to an end (**I shall come forth**).
- God would bring something good from it all (**I shall come forth as gold**).
- God still valued Job; only precious metal is put through the fire (**as gold**).

ii. "Suddenly, in the midst of this bitter complaining, there flamed out a most remarkable evidence of the tenacity of his faith. He declared with conviction that God knew the way he was taking. He even affirmed his confidence that it was God Who was trying him, and that presently he would come forth from the process as gold." (Morgan)

iii. "It looks very hard to believe that a child of God should be tried by the loss of his Father's presence, and yet should come forth uninjured by the trial. Yet no gold is ever injured in the fire. Stoke the furnace as much as you may, let the blast be as strong as you will, thrust the ingot into the very center of the white heat, let it lie in the very heart of the flame; pile on

more fuel, let another blast torment the coals till they become most vehement with heat, yet the gold is losing nothing, it may even be gaining." (Spurgeon)

iv. "Now he accepts the testing, because he knows: *I shall come forth as gold*. This image, drawn from metallurgy, does not necessarily imply purification. It could mean simply that the test proves that Job had been pure gold all along." (Andersen)

v. "I shall ask four questions of every man within reach of my voice. God knoweth the way that you take. I will ask you first: Do you know your own way? Secondly: Is it a comfort to you that God knows your way? Thirdly: Are you tried in the way? And, if so, fourthly: Have you confidence in God as to the result of that trial? Can you say with Job, 'When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold?'" (Spurgeon)

b. My foot has held fast to His steps: This was a dramatic defense of his integrity before his accusing friends. Job declared that he still followed God (**I have kept His way**) and loved His word (**I have treasured the words of His mouth**).

i. "God spoke to Job. Did God ever speak to you? I do not suppose Job had a single page of inspired writing. Probably he had not – even seen the first books of Moses; he may have done so, but probably he had not. God spoke to him. Did he ever speak to you? No man will ever serve God aright unless God has spoken to him." (Spurgeon)

ii. "Then note, that what God had spoken to him he treasured up. He says in the Hebrew that he had hid God's word more than ever he had hidden his necessary food. They had to hide grain away in those days to guard it from wandering Arabs. Job had been more careful to store up God's word than to store up

his wheat and his barley; more anxious to preserve the memory of what God had spoken than to garner his harvests. Do you treasure up what God has spoken?" (Spurgeon)

2. (13-17) *Job wonders at God's power and sovereignty.*

"But He *is* unique, and who can make Him change?

And *whatever* His soul desires, *that* He does.

For He performs *what is* appointed for me,

And many such *things are* with Him.

Therefore I am terrified at His presence;

When I consider *this*, I am afraid of Him.

For God made my heart weak,

And the Almighty terrifies me;

Because I was not cut off from the presence of darkness,

And He did *not* hide deep darkness from my face."

a. **But He is unique, and who can make Him change:** Job here argued back with himself against his previous great declaration of faith. He understood, though he did deeply and sincerely trust in God, at the same time he could not *make* God do anything.

i. "Verse 13 is a monotheistic affirmation. Job said, 'He (God) is the unique (one).' The Hebrew expression is rare in the OT but idiomatic." (Smick)

ii. The older King James Version translates **who can make Him change** as *who can turn Him?* "But oh! The text itself is music to my ears. It seems to sound like the martial trumpet of the battle, and my soul is ready for the fray. It seems now that if trials and troubles should come, if I could but hold my hand upon this precious text, I would laugh at them all. 'Who can turn him?' — I would shout — 'Who can turn him?' Come on, earth and hell, come on, for 'who can turn him?'" (Spurgeon)

b. He performs what is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him: Job had to admit that God would do as He pleased in Job's life and would not be held hostage to Job's demands. He understood that the reasons and wisdom of God's work are ultimately

with Him and not known to Job or others (such as Job's friends).

i. Job here seemed to come closer and closer to the place God wanted him to be in his crisis. He comes closer and closer to realizing that God can be trusted, that God does in fact love and care for him; but at the same time He is sovereign, and at least some of His ways are beyond our knowing.

c. Therefore I was terrified at His presence... God has made my heart weak: Knowing what he could not know about God made Job appreciate the distance between himself and God. It made him feel a good and righteous awe of God, though it felt like **deep darkness** because it was little comfort to him in his crisis.

i. "Job's strongest assertions of faith seem always to be coupled with equally strong assertions of fear and pain. In this chapter his confidence in his own righteousness is more unassailable than ever, yet at the same time 'thick darkness covers' his face and he is filled with dread. Somehow Job's faith is elastic enough to embrace simultaneously both terror and confidence." (Mason)

Job 24:1 Why doesn't God set a time for judging, a day of justice for those who serve him?

Job 24:2 People move property lines to get more land; they steal sheep and put them with their own flocks.

Job 24:3 They take donkeys that belong to orphans, and keep a widow's ox till she pays her debts.

Job 24:4 They prevent the poor from getting their rights and force the needy to run and hide.

Job 24:5 So the poor, like wild donkeys, search for food in the dry wilderness; nowhere else can they find food for their children.

Job 24:6 They have to harvest fields they don't own, and gather grapes in vineyards of the wicked.

Job 24:7 At night they sleep with nothing to cover them, nothing to keep them from the cold.

Job 24:8 They are drenched by the rain that falls on the mountains, and they huddle beside the rocks for shelter.

Job 24:9 Evil people make slaves of fatherless infants and take the children of the poor in payment for debts.

Job 24:10 But the poor must go out with no clothes to protect them; they must go hungry while harvesting wheat.

Job 24:11 They press olives for oil, and grapes for wine, but they themselves are thirsty.

Job 24:12 In the cities the wounded and dying cry out, but God ignores their prayers.

Job 24:13 There are those who reject the light; they don't understand it or go where it leads.

Job 24:14 At dawn the murderer gets up and goes out to kill the poor, and at night he steals.

Job 24:15 The adulterer waits for twilight to come; he covers his face so that no one can see him.

Job 24:16 At night thieves break into houses, but by day they hide and avoid the light.

Job 24:17 They fear the light of day, but darkness holds no terror for them.

Job 24:18 The wicked are swept away by floods, and the land they own is under God's curse; they no longer go to work in their vineyards.

Job 24:19 As snow vanishes in heat and drought, so sinners vanish from the land of the living.

Job 24:20 Not even their mothers remember them now; they are eaten by worms and destroyed like fallen trees.

Job 24:21 That happens because they mistreated widows and showed no kindness to childless women.

Job 24:22 God, in his strength, destroys the mighty; God acts—and the wicked die.

Job 24:23 God may let them live secure, but keeps an eye on them all the time.

Job 24:24 For a while the wicked prosper, but then they wither like weeds, like stalks of grain that have been cut down.

Job 24:25 Can anyone deny that this is so? Can anyone prove that my words are not true?

Job 24:1-25

Job 24 – The Problem of the Seeming Security of the Wicked

A. Job explains the conduct of the wicked.

1. (1-8) The conduct of the wicked.

**“Since times are not hidden from the Almighty,
Why do those who know Him see not His days?”**

“Some remove landmarks;

They seize flocks violently and feed *on them*;

They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;

They take the widow’s ox as a pledge.

They push the needy off the road;

All the poor of the land are forced to hide.

Indeed, *like* wild donkeys in the desert,

They go out to their work, searching for food.

The wilderness *yields* food for them *and* for *their* children.

**They gather their fodder in the field
And glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
They spend the night naked, without clothing,
And have no covering in the cold.
They are wet with the showers of the mountains,
And huddle around the rock for want of shelter."**

a. **Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know Him see not His days:** The sense of this difficult verse seems to be, "Since God knows and will judge everything, why are the godly kept in the dark about His ways?" This had special application to the question of why God allows the seeming prosperity of the wicked, discussed in the following verses.

i. The NIV translates this verse, *Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?* The New Living Translation has, *Why doesn't the Almighty open the court and bring judgment? Why must the godly wait for him in vain?*

ii. The first verse of this chapter is not the only difficult portion. "In chapter 24 we run into all kinds of problems. First there are textual difficulties, which render many lines almost unintelligible... Secondly, the speech as a whole seems incoherent to many readers... Thirdly, chapter 24 is said to express sentiments that Job could never have uttered. They would sound better on the lips of his friends." (Andersen)

b. **Some remove landmarks... they take the widow's ox as a pledge... all the poor of the land are forced to hide:** Here, Job described the mostly financial sins of the wicked, rooted in greed and cruelty. In Job 22:5-11, Eliphaz said that Job's calamity came upon him because he acted this way towards others, and

his riches were therefore gained by greed and wickedness. Job agreed with Eliphaz that this is how wicked people act, without agreeing with him that he himself acted this way.

i. "The law of Moses denounces curses on those who remove their neighbours' landmarks. See Deu 19:14; Deu 27:17." (Clarke)

ii. "Here you see the rich landowner removing his neighbour's landmark, curtailing by fraud, in a hedgeless unfenced land, the narrow possessions of his poorer countrymen. *Cursed, you remember the solemn words, cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen!* But Job sees no curse fall!" (Bradley)

2. (9-12) *The wicked oppress the weak.*

**"Some snatch the fatherless from the breast,
And take a pledge from the poor.
They cause *the poor* to go naked, without clothing;
And they take away the sheaves from the hungry.
They press out oil within their walls,
And tread winepresses, yet suffer thirst.
The dying groan in the city,
And the souls of the wounded cry out;
Yet God does not charge *them* with wrong."**

a. **Some snatch the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge from the poor:** In a vivid description, Job described the heartless oppression inflicted upon the poor by the godless. One would expect that Job would not condemn this so strongly if he were guilty of the same (as accused by Eliphaz in Job 22:5-11).

i. "The touching pathos of these word-pictures should be felt by the reader, for they give us some insight

into Job's contempt for wickedness and his ability to empathize with those in distress." (Smick)

b. **Yet God does not charge them with wrong:** This was the part that was difficult for Job to understand and accept. He knew how wicked the wicked were; what he could not comprehend was why God did not judge them as they deserved.

i. "Job pleads with God to subpoena sinners and judge them. With mounting frustration, Job cites example after example of sinners who go unpunished." (Lawson)

ii. "Job felt God should demonstrate his justice by openly punishing the wicked. In the divine speeches God would teach him a tremendous lesson about this, which he did not now understand." (Smick)

iii. **The dying groan in the city:** "After having shown the oppressions carried on in the *country*, he takes a view of those carried on in the *town*. Here the miseries are too numerous to be detailed." (Clarke)

B. The seeming security of the wicked.

1. (13-17) *The deeds done in darkness.*

**"There are those who rebel against the light;
They do not know its ways
Nor abide in its paths.
The murderer rises with the light;
He kills the poor and needy;
And in the night he is like a thief.
The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,
Saying, 'No eye will see me';
And he disguises *his* face.
In the dark they break into houses
Which they marked for themselves in the daytime;
They do not know the light.**

For the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death;

If someone recognizes them,

They are in the terrors of the shadow of death."

a. **There are those who rebel against the light:** In powerful poetic images, Job describes the kind of sin that happens under the cover of darkness. Darkness is used as a cloak for **the murderer**, the **thief**, and the **adulterer**.

i. It was almost as if Job anticipated the later instruction from the Apostle Paul: *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts* (Rom 13:12-14).

b. **For the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death:** One should regard the morning as something good; the coming of light after the dark night. Yet for these wicked people, **morning is the same to them as the shadow of death**. It is a bad thing to them, not a good thing.

i. Clarke made special application of this to the **adulterer**. "The morning dawns: but it is to him as the *shadow of death*, lest he should be detected before he can reach his own home. *And if one know him* – if he happen to be *recognized* in coming out of the forbidden house; *the terrors of death* seize upon him, being afraid that the thing shall be brought to light, or that he shall be called to account, a sanguinary account, by the injured husband."

2. (18-21) *What should happen to the wicked.*

**"They *should be* swift on the face of the waters,
Their portion *should be* cursed in the earth,
So that no one would turn into the way of their vineyards.**

**As drought and heat consume the snow waters,
So the grave *consumes those who* have sinned.**

**The womb *should* forget him,
The worm *should* feed sweetly on him;
He *should* be remembered no more,
And wickedness *should* be broken like a tree.
For he preys on the barren *who* do not bear,
And does no good for the widow."**

a. **Their portion should be cursed in the earth:** Job wondered why God did not judge the wicked as He should (Job 24:1). Here, it is as if Job gave God advice on how He *should* judge the wicked; mainly, He should do it *in this life* and not wait until the life beyond (**cursed in the earth**).

b. **The worm should feed sweetly on him; he should be remembered no more:** Job wasn't against the idea of the wicked being punished after death; he simply didn't want the punishment to begin there. He thought it should begin in this life and be continued afterwards.

i. **He preys on the barren who do not bear:** "The barren wife was considered more helpless than the widow, as the latter might have sons to help her." (Bullinger)

3. (22-25) *The seeming security of the wicked.*

**"But God draws the mighty away with His power;
He rises up, but no *man* is sure of life.
He gives them security, and they rely *on it*;
Yet His eyes *are* on their ways.
They are exalted for a little while,
Then they are gone.**

**They are brought low;
They are taken out of the way like all *others*;
They dry out like the heads of grain."**

**"Now if *it is not so*, who will prove me a liar,
And make my speech worth nothing?"**

a. But God draws the mighty away with His power:

Job here considered that perhaps the fate of the wicked in the world beyond *was* retribution enough for the scales of divine justice. Yes, the wicked seem to prosper in this life (**he rises up**); yet at the same time **no man is sure of life**.

i. In these verses Job sounds almost like Asaph in Psalms 73, who was troubled at the prosperity of the wicked until he went into the house of God, and understood their end.

ii. "Job does not counter the friends by a one-sided exaggeration of his own, claiming that God is hostile to the upright and an accomplice of the crooked. His position is more balanced, but more baffled. He simply cannot see how God's justice works out in his own case." (Andersen)

b. He gives them security, and they rely on it; yet His eyes are on their ways: Job reminded himself that God *was not* blind to the sins of the wicked, and even if they did seem to prosper well enough in this life, soon enough **then they are gone** and **they are brought low**.

i. The sense from Job is that God allows such prosperity to some of the wicked to *increase* their ultimate judgment. He does indeed give **them security** and they do **rely on it**; but they end up as **dry... heads of grain**.

ii. "In the East, they generally reap their harvest by just taking off the tops of the ears of corn, and leaving the straw. Thus will the wicked be cut off."
(Spurgeon)

c. **Now if it is not so, who will prove me a liar:** "Job challenges all men to contradict what he affirms, — that the righteous may be greater sufferers, and the wicked may for awhile prosper, but that God will, in the end, overthrow the ungodly, and establish the righteous."
(Spurgeon)

Bildad Speaks: Man Cannot Be Righteous

Job 25:1 (1-2) God is powerful; all must stand in awe of him; he keeps his heavenly kingdom in peace.

Job 25:3 Can anyone count the angels who serve him? Is there any place where God's light does not shine?

Job 25:4 Can anyone be righteous or pure in God's sight?

Job 25:5 In his eyes even the moon is not bright, or the stars pure.

Job 25:6 Then what about a human being, that worm, that insect? What is a human life worth in God's eyes?

Job 25:1-6

Job 25 – Bildad's Final Speech

A. Bildad muses upon the greatness of God.

1. (1) *Bildad's final speech.*

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

a. **Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:** This is the final word from Job's three friends. The shortness of this statement of Bildad (and some textual problems in Job 24) leads some to wrongly think that the text is simply confused beyond recovery.

i. "Most modern scholars have lengthened this short speech by including 26:5-14, but there is no obvious reason why this should be done. The theme is similar but not the same." (Smick)

b. **Answered and said:** Yet while acknowledging some difficulties in the text, it is better to simply see the brevity of this final statement from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar to reflect the fact that the debate is running out of fuel and starts a transition to a different stage of the book.

i. Also, what Bildad says here has basically been said before. "A pithy and ponderous speech he here maketh, though little to the purpose... he chooseth to sing the same song with his fellows, concerning the power and purity of God above all creatures." (Trapp)

ii. "The brevity of this speech of Bildad is in itself suggestive, as it shows that even though Job has not convinced these friends of his that their philosophy does not include his case, he has succeeded in silencing them." (Morgan)

iii. "Beginning at Chapter 25, the formal structure of the book would dictate two more chapter-long rebuttals, one from Bildad and one from Zophar, to complete the third round of the dialogue. But this is not what happens. Instead Zophar has no final speech at all, and Bildad's speech is drastically cut short. So the formal debate is never finished. At Chapter 26 the dialogue grinds to a halt, and from there to the end of Chapter 31 Job holds forth alone in a long and loose-jointed presentation... Finally in this list... there is the odd case of Elihu, the brand-new character introduced near the end of the book, who delivers what many readers feel to be the most long-winded, boring, and irrelevant discourse of all." (Mason)

2. (2-3) *The greatness of God.*

**“Dominion and fear *belong* to Him;
He makes peace in His high places.
Is there any number to His armies?
Upon whom does His light not rise?**

a. **Dominion and fear belong to Him:** In exasperation, Bildad can only repeat what has already been agreed to by Job and all three of his friends; they have already expressed agreement on the greatness of God.

b. **Is there any number to His armies:** Bildad also wanted Job to know that God was an impossible foe, and that he should simply surrender to this great God who is so mighty in **armies**.

i. “*Of his armies*; of the angels, and stars, and other creatures, all which are his hosts, wholly submitting themselves to his will, to be and do what God would have them; and therefore how insolent and unreasonable a thing it is for thee to quarrel with him!” (Poole)

B. Man in light of the greatness of God.

1. (4) *The question stated.*

**How then can man be righteous before God?
Or how can he be pure *who is* born of a woman?**

a. **How then can man be righteous before God:** Bildad is again stating matters that are not in controversy. Job said the same thing (Job 9:2) in response to Bildad’s first speech.

i. “Bildad is in touch with nothing, he is courageously heartless; he never thinks when he talks, but simply pours it out. The ‘Bildad’ type is often met with in the pulpit; men roll out phrases and talk the most ponderous stuff with nothing in it.” (Chambers)

b. Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman:

The purpose of these questions seems to be to cause Job to understand that he is a sinner just like all, making it easier for him to confess and repent.

i. "Our whole nativity is impure. Hence in the law it is commanded, that the woman should be unclean seven days, that the child should be circumcised on the eighth day; and that the mother should remain three and thirty days in the blood of her purification, Leviticus 13." (Trapp)

2. (5-6) Man's relative greatness compared to creation.

**If even the moon does not shine,
And the stars are not pure in His sight,
How much less man, *who is a maggot*,
And a son of man, *who is a worm*?"**

a. If even the moon does not shine, and the stars are not pure in His sight: Bildad considered that even some of the glorious aspects of creation still fall short of the glory of the Creator.

i. "Some think that by *stars* are meant those *angels who kept not their first estate*: this may be so, but I cannot see it in the text. It may, however, mean the *heavenly host*, as it is supposed to do, Job 28:7, but I still must hesitate on the propriety of such applications." (Clarke)

b. How much less man, who is a maggot: If the **moon** and the **stars** cannot reflect the glory of God as they should, then it stands to reason that man cannot either.

i. "A *worm*, to wit, mean and vile, and impotent; proceeding from corruption, and returning to it; and withal filthy and loathsome, and so every way a very

unfit person to appear before the high and holy God, and much more to contend with him.” (Poole)

ii. Bildad’s final argument was based upon a misunderstanding of Job’s previous words. He seemed to think that Job wanted to convince God that *He* was wrong, and therefore Bildad wanted to emphasize the proper relation between the glory of God and the humility of man. “Without argument, Bildad made it perfectly clear that, in his mind, the guilt of Job was established.” (Morgan)

iii. “We may observe the irony that being maggots themselves has not in the least discouraged Bildad and his colleagues from presuming to pass judgment on their fellow maggot Job. But who are mere maggots to exercise judgment?” (Mason)

iv. “Unlike the apostle Paul who developed the doctrine of total depravity in Romans 1-3 to prepare the way for grace, we know from the rest of Bildad’s remarks that he left no room for mercy or forgiveness.” (Smick)

v. “On this disgusting and hopeless note the words of Job’s friends end.” (Andersen)

Job Replies: God's Majesty Is Unsearchable

Job 26:1 (1-2) What a big help you are to me—poor, weak man that I am!

Job 26:3 You give such good advice and share your knowledge with a fool like me!

Job 26:4 Who do you think will hear all your words? Who inspired you to speak like this?

Job 26:5 The spirits of the dead tremble in the waters under the earth.

Job 26:6 The world of the dead lies open to God; no covering shields it from his sight.

Job 26:7 God stretched out the northern sky and hung the earth in empty space.

Job 26:8 It is God who fills the clouds with water and keeps them from bursting with the weight.

Job 26:9 He hides the full moon behind a cloud.

Job 26:10 He divided light from darkness by a circle drawn on the face of the sea.

Job 26:11 When he threatens the pillars that hold up the sky, they shake and tremble with fear.

Job 26:12 It is his strength that conquered the sea; by his skill he destroyed the monster Rahab.

Job 26:13 It is his breath that made the sky clear, and his hand that killed the escaping monster.

Job 26:14 But these are only hints of his power, only the whispers that we have heard. Who can know how truly great God is?

Job 26:1-14

Job 26 – Job’s Response to Bildad

A. Job challenges his friends.

1. (1-2) Have you practically helped me or anyone else?

But Job answered and said:

“How have you helped *him who is* without power?

How have you saved the arm that has no strength?

a. **But Job answered and said:** This begins a long discourse of Job, which first answered the brief speech of Bildad (Job 25), and then became a speech on wisdom and a final defense, ending in Job 31.

i. “The pronouns are singular; Job is addressing one person, presumably Bildad.” (Andersen)

ii. “He begins then, in Chapter 26, with three verses of scornful irony, addressed apparently to the last

speaker, but obviously intended for each of the three." (Bradley)

iii. "Bildad has struck a most sensitive nerve... Job could not restrain himself. He leveled a sarcastic reply directly at the speaker... He had nothing but contempt for Bildad's wisdom." (Smick)

b. How have you helped him who is without power:

Job considered all the wisdom from Bildad and his two friends (Eliphaz and Zophar), and wondered where the *help* or *strength* was in any of it.

i. At the end of it all, Job's friends got to the point where they were so concerned about being right that they forgot to be concerned about helping Job.

2. (3-4) *Have you helped me or anyone else with your wisdom?*

How have you counseled *one who has no wisdom*?

And *how* have you declared sound advice to many?

To whom have you uttered words?

And whose spirit came from you?"

a. How have you counseled one who has no

wisdom: Job made these statements broad enough to include not only himself, but also anyone else that Bildad and his friends failed to help.

i. "A most wise and profound discourse thou hast made, and much to the purpose: an ironical expression, as before." (Poole)

b. To whom have you uttered words: Job wondered who else had been damaged by the insensitivity and misapplied wisdom of his friends.

c. **Whose spirit came from you:** In the very first speech of Job's friends (Job 4), Eliphaz said that a mysterious spirit had revealed to him his principles. The message from the shadowy spirit began, *Can a mortal be more righteous than his God?* (Job 4:17). Bildad then repeated the same idea to Job in Job 25:4, as well as other recycled arguments in that brief chapter. Therefore, Job wanted to know from Bildad: **Whose spirit came from you**, or as the New International Version has it, *Whose spirit spoke from your mouth?*

i. "Like a broken record, the first word and the last words of Job's friends are exactly the same, and all their words in between have been but variations on this one theme." (Mason)

B. Job praises God and His awesome power in creation.

"Then, to show the poverty of Bildad's argument, he spoke of the greatness of God to prove that he knew it, and even more perfectly than his friends." (Morgan)

1. (5-13) *A description of the power of God.*

**"The dead tremble,
Those under the waters and those inhabiting them.
Sheol is naked before Him,
And Destruction has no covering.
He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
He binds up the water in His thick clouds,
Yet the clouds are not broken under it.
He covers the face of *His* throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at His rebuke.**

**He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.**

a. **The dead tremble, those under the waters and those inhabiting them:** Many suggestions have been offered for the identity of these “watery dead.” Some think that Job believed that **Sheol** was a watery abyss, connected it with an idea suggested by 2Sa 22:5. Others think it is just a poetical way of describing those who are buried in the *lowest pit*, in *the depths* (Psa 88:6). Some even believe **those inhabiting the waters** are actually fish and sea creatures. It seems best to regard it as a poetic and non-technical description of the uncertainty, darkness, and gloom of the world beyond.

i. Job used similar imagery in Job 10:21-22 : *The land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness itself.*

ii. Yet the point in context should not be missed. Job’s idea is that there is no place hidden from God; everything (including the realm of the dead and the depths of the sea) is **naked before Him**.

iii. **Destruction has no covering:** “That is, hell, the place of destruction, the palace of King Abaddon (so the devil is called, Rev 9:11), and so hell is called in this text, because thereinto are thrust all that are destined to destruction, all the brats of fathomless perdition.” (Trapp)

b. **He hangs the earth on nothing:** Job remarkably understood this. In contrast to ancient mythologies that said the earth was held up on the backs of elephants or giant turtles, Job knew that **He hangs the earth on nothing**.

i. "*He hangeth the earth upon nothing.* You see how nearly the Poet-philosopher lays his hand on the yet unveiled secrets of Nature. We can hardly wonder that the passage caught the eye of a Kepler, fresh from removing a portion of the veil." (Bradley)

ii. "The greatness of this work of God appeareth hereby, saith Merlin, that men cannot spread aloft the thinnest curtain, without some solid thing to uphold it." (Trapp)

c. **He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness:** Job also understood the principles of the curvature of the earth and the curved nature of the **horizon**.

i. "The fact that God can spread out the heavens over empty space, hang the earth on nothing, and fill the clouds with water without their bursting is intended to make us stand in awe (Job 26:8)." (Smick)

ii. **The pillars of heaven tremble:** "Those mountains which by their height and strength may seem to reach and support the heavens, as the poets said of Atlas; for this is a poetical book, and there are many poetical expressions in it." (Poole)

d. **He stirs up the sea with His power:** Job knew the mighty energy displayed in storms that stirred up the sea, and he knew that this was from the **power** of God.

i. "The sea, which is fitly called *proud*, as its waves are called, Job 38:11, because it is lofty, and fierce, and swelling, and unruly; which God is said to *smite* when he subdues and restrains its rage, and turns the storm into a calm." (Poole)

e. **His hand pierced the fleeing serpent:** This is another obscure reference to an ancient **serpent** defeated by God. Isa 51:9 and Psa 89:8-10 also speak

of a serpent associated with the sea that God defeated as a demonstration of His great strength, and identifies this serpent with the name *Rahab*, meaning *proud one*.

i. Ancient rabbinic mythologies suggest that an evil serpent was in the primeval sea resisting creation, and that God killed the serpent and brought order to the world (Gen 1:1-2).

ii. Satan is often represented as a dragon or a serpent (Genesis 3; Revelation 12, 13), and the sea is thought of as a dangerous or threatening place in the Jewish mind (Isa 57:20; Mar 4:39; Rev 21:1). Therefore, Leviathan may be another serpent-like manifestation of Satan, who was the original "Rahab" (*proud one*).

iii. In the ancient times of Job, there were many popular legends about the gods who combated different hostile deities in order to create the earth. Job took some of these stories and made the Lord God the hero of them. Therefore, it is the Lord God who **stirs up the sea by His power**, when ancient legends said that Tiamat (the Deep) was the chaotic goddess defeated by the hero god Marduk (Bel), or Yam (the Sea) who was defeated by Baal.

iv. "Here the sea that God subdues is not the deity Yam. Job depersonalized Yam by using the definite article (the sea), thus expressing his innate monotheistic theology. Marduk employed seven winds to overthrow Tiamat; here God's own breath clears the heavens. All the power of the wind is his breath. Further, by his own wisdom, skill, and power he 'cut Rahab to pieces' and 'pierced the gliding serpent,' unlike Marduk who depended on the enablement of the father-gods... Job, then, demonstrated God's authority over the domain of Mot (the god of death)

in Job 26:5-6 and over the domain of Baal (the cosmic storm god in Job 26:7-10). And in Job 26:12-13 Job drew attention to God's awe-inspiring power over the domain of Yam (the stormy sea-god)." (Smick)

v. "A study of the Old Testament names for the well-known Canaanite mythological sea monsters like Rahab shows how purposefully the Old Testament authors used the language to enrich their own poetic conceptions of the supremacy of the one and only true God." (Smick)

2. (14) Man in light of the power of God.

**Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"**

a. **Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways:** Job's description of the power of God in Job 26:5-13 is amazing and impressive; yet Job knew that this description did not begin to fully describe God.

i. When God finally speaks to Job later in the book, He will speak to Job more about His ways, upon which Job has only touched the **edges**. He will bring some of the **thunder of His power** to Job.

ii. "The explanation of Job's suffering is the fact that God and Satan had made a battleground of his soul. It was not for Job's chastening or his perfecting, but for an ulterior purpose which he did not know, but his intuition made him stick to the fact that the only One who could explain the sublimities of Nature was the One who could explain what he was going through." (Chambers)

b. **But the thunder of His power who can understand:** Job understood a lot about God; but He

understood enough to know there was far more than he *did not* understand.

i. "His mighty power, which is aptly compared to thunder, in regard of it irresistible force, and the terror which it causeth to wicked men." (Poole)

Job Continues: I Will Maintain My Integrity

Job 27:1 (1-2) I swear by the living Almighty God, who refuses me justice and makes my life bitter—

Job 27:3 as long as God gives me breath,

Job 27:4 my lips will never say anything evil, my tongue will never tell a lie.

Job 27:5 I will never say that you men are right; I will insist on my innocence to my dying day.

Job 27:6 I will never give up my claim to be right; my conscience is clear.

Job 27:7 May all who oppose me and fight against me be punished like the wicked and the unrighteous.

Job 27:8 What hope is there for the godless in the hour when God demands their life?

Job 27:9 When trouble comes, will God hear their cries?

Job 27:10 They should have desired the joy he gives; they should have constantly prayed to him.

Job 27:11 Let me teach you how great is God's power, and explain what Almighty God has planned.

Job 27:12 But no, after all, you have seen for yourselves; so why do you talk such nonsense?

Job 27:13 This is how Almighty God punishes wicked, violent people.

Job 27:14 They may have many sons, but all will be killed in war; their children never have enough to eat.

Job 27:15 Those who survive will die from disease, and even their widows will not mourn their death.

Job 27:16 The wicked may have too much silver to count and more clothes than anyone needs;

Job 27:17 but some good person will wear the clothes, and someone honest will get the silver.

Job 27:18 The wicked build houses like a spider's web or like the hut of a slave guarding the fields.

Job 27:19 One last time they will lie down rich, and when they wake up, they will find their wealth gone.

Job 27:20 Terror will strike like a sudden flood; a wind in the night will blow them away;

Job 27:21 the east wind will sweep them from their homes;

Job 27:22 it will blow down on them without pity while they try their best to escape.

Job 27:23 The wind howls at them as they run, frightening them with destructive power.

Job 27:1-23

Job 27 – Job and His Integrity

A. Job boldly declares that he will maintain his integrity.

1. (1-6) Job's commitment to the truth.

Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said:

**"As God lives, *who* has taken away my justice,
And the Almighty, *who* has made my soul bitter,
As long as my breath *is* in me,
And the breath of God in my nostrils,
My lips will not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.**

Far be it from me

That I should say you are right;

Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

**My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go;
My heart shall not reproach *me* as long as I live."**

a. Moreover Job continued his discourse and said:

It seems that Job waited for his friends to reply – it was, after all, Zophar's turn. But they were silent, either out of weariness or frustration with Job; so Job continued.

i. "It is not that they lost the debate; rather, what they have lost is all patience with Job. They have given up on Job as a bad job. From now on their only argument will be the argument of silence, of throwing up their hands in disgust. What can you do with a man who is so pig-headed and incorrigible?" (Mason)

b. As God lives, who has taken away my justice: In the previous chapter Job praised the power of God, but he also recognized that he needed something more than the might of God. He needed rescue from the one who **has made my soul bitter.**

i. "Job has already appealed to God many times. Now swearing 'by the life of God', he uses the strongest measure possible for forcing God's hand." (Andersen)

ii. "The juxtaposition is jarringly ironic. Even as Job confesses his faith in the living God, he matter-of-factly accuses this God of deserting him, of leaving him in the lurch... Job does not say, 'as I live,' but 'as God lives,' even though this God has hidden His face and denied him justice." (Mason)

iii. "He felt God had denied him justice but inconsistently still knew that somehow God was just; so he could swear by his life. This same incongruity applies also to his earlier fantasies, when with highly emotional words he viewed God as his enemy." (Smick)

iv. Spurgeon preached a sermon on this text titled *A Vexed Soul Comforted*, speaking to the child of God who felt that God had made their soul bitter. "Child of God, are you vexed and embittered in soul? Then, bravely accept the trial as coming from your Father, and say, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' Press on through the cloud which now lowers directly in your pathway; it may be with you as it was with the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, 'they feared as they entered the cloud,' yet in the cloud they saw their Master's glory, and they found it good to be there." (Spurgeon)

v. "If it be the Almighty who has troubled us, *surely he can also comfort us*. He that is strong to sink is also strong to save. If he be almighty to embitter, he must also be almighty to sweeten. Oh, yes, that word 'Almighty' cuts both ways! It makes us tremble, and so it kills our pride; but it also makes us hope, and so it slays our despair." (Spurgeon)

c. **My lips will not speak wickedness:** In his bold and plain-spoken manner to this point, one might think that Job had spoken **wickedness** before God and his friends. Yet Job did not think that he had, and he insisted that he would not.

i. "He complaineth of God's severity, but stormeth not against him. He blustereth, but he blasphemeth not." (Trapp)

d. **Far be it from me that I should say you are right:** When Job protested that he would **not speak wickedness**, he meant it especially in the context of saying that he would not agree that his friends were **right** in their accusations against him.

i. "Using another formula of self-cursing, he says, 'I'll be damned if ever I concede that you are right!'" (Andersen)

2. (7-10) *The vain hope of the hypocrite.*

**"May my enemy be like the wicked,
And he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.
For what is the hope of the hypocrite,
Though he may gain *much*, If God takes away his life?
Will God hear his cry
When trouble comes upon him?
Will he delight himself in the Almighty?
Will he always call on God?"**

a. **May my enemy be like the wicked:** Here Job, in rather strong terms, is asking for the same punishment his friends think he deserves to be put upon their own heads, because of their false accusations.

i. "In Israelite law the penalty for malicious prosecution of the innocent was the punishment attached to the crime wrongly charged. Hence Job's repudiation of the charges with the oath, 'Let my hater be treated *as the wicked* person he untruthfully says I am.'" (Andersen)

b. **For what is the hope of the hypocrite:** Job was accused by his friends of being a **hypocrite**; of clinging to hidden sin instead of confessing and repenting. Here, Job agreed that the **hope of the hypocrite** was vain.

c. **Will God hear his cry... Will he always call on God:** Job was in a difficult situation before his friends. He agreed that God did not **hear** the **cry** of the hypocrite, but he had to endure his own season of silence from God. Job could comfort himself in the understanding that he did in fact **call on God** as a hypocrite would not.

i. A sure sign of the hypocrite is that he will not **always call on God**. "He may by his afflictions be driven to prayer; but if God doth not speedily answer him, he falls into despair, and neglect of God and of prayer; whereas I constantly continue in prayer, notwithstanding the grievousness and the long continuance of my calamities." (Poole)

B. Job agrees that God will judge the wicked.

1. (11-12) *A short rebuke of Job's friends.*

**"I will teach you about the hand of God;
What *is* with the Almighty I will not conceal.
Surely all of you have seen *it*;
Why then do you behave with complete nonsense?"**

a. **I will teach you about the hand of God:** Job was deeply frustrated at the lack of understanding from his friends. They knew certain principles about God and His way in the world, but they misapplied those principles to Job's situation.

i. "Job was saying, 'Must I teach you about God's power to punish? Indeed, I could never conceal from you a subject on which you have expounded at length.'" (Smick)

b. **Why then do you behave with complete nonsense:** Job's friends claimed to know God and his ways, yet they analyzed Job's crisis in a nonsensical way.

i. "Summoning all the strength of his faith, he declared that he would teach his opponents 'concerning the hand of God,' and he now practically took hold of all that they had said about God's visitation on the wicked, and hurled it back on them as an anathema." (Morgan)

2. (13-23) *The portion of the wicked man.*

**“This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, received from the
Almighty:**

**If his children are multiplied, *it is* for the sword;
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.**

Those who survive him shall be buried in death,

And their widows shall not weep,

Though he heaps up silver like dust,

And piles up clothing like clay;

He may pile *it* up, but the just will wear *it*,

And the innocent will divide the silver.

He builds his house like a moth,

Like a booth *which* a watchman makes.

The rich man will lie down,

But not be gathered *up*;

He opens his eyes,

And he *is* no more.

Terrors overtake him like a flood;

A tempest steals him away in the night.

The east wind carries him away, and he is gone;

It sweeps him out of his place.

It hurls against him and does not spare;

He flees desperately from its power.

***Men* shall clap their hands at him,**

And shall hiss him out of his place.”

a. This is the portion of the wicked man with God:

In this section, Job argued strongly – as strongly as any of his three friends – that judgment awaits the **wicked man**, and that he will not be ultimately blessed. This was an important argument for Job to make in front of his friends, because they accused him of overturning God’s moral order in the world. Job insists that he agreed (in general) with the idea that wickedness is rewarded with judgment from God (**received from the Almighty**).

i. "Hence his prediction of the judgment on the godless is not a belated conversion to his friends' point of view... Since Job nowhere denies the justice of God, it is not inconsistent for him to affirm it here. The disagreement between Job and his friends is not over whether God is just or not; it is over how the justice of God is seen to work out in particular events, and specifically in Job's experiences." (Andersen)

b. **If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword... Terrors overtake him like a flood... The east wind carries him away... Men shall clap their hands at him:** This description of the bitter portion of the wicked man includes many aspects that applied to Job and his own crisis. It should not be taken as an admission of guilt; instead Job's idea was, "I know that my situation *looks like* the judgment of God on the wicked, yet I assure you that it is not."

i. "As a *moth*; which settleth itself in a garment, but is quickly and unexpectedly brushed off, and dispossessed of its dwelling, and crushed to death." (Poole)

ii. "God shall kick him off the stage of the world, and then men shall clap and hiss at him in sign of detestation." (Trapp)

iii. "It seems it was an ancient method to *clap the hands* against and *hiss* a man from any public office, who had acted improperly in it. The populace, in European countries, express their disapprobation of public characters who have not pleased them in the same manner to the present day, by *hisses*, *groans*, and the like." (Clarke)

Job Continues: Where Is Wisdom?

Job 28:1 There are mines where silver is dug; There are places where gold is refined.

Job 28:2 We dig iron out of the ground And melt copper out of the stones.

Job 28:3 Miners explore the deepest darkness. They search the depths of the earth And dig for rocks in the darkness.

Job 28:4 Far from where anyone lives Or human feet ever travel, They dig the shafts of mines. There they work in loneliness, Clinging to ropes in the pits.

Job 28:5 Food grows out of the earth, But underneath the same earth All is torn up and crushed.

Job 28:6 The stones of the earth contain sapphires, And its dust contains gold.

Job 28:7 No hawk sees the roads to the mines, And no vulture ever flies over them.

Job 28:8 No lion or other fierce beast Ever travels those lonely roads.

Job 28:9 Miners dig the hardest rocks, Dig mountains away at their base.

Job 28:10 As they tunnel through the rocks, They discover precious stones.

Job 28:11 They dig to the sources of rivers And bring to light what is hidden.

Job 28:12 But where can wisdom be found? Where can we learn to understand?

Job 28:13 Wisdom is not to be found among mortals; No one knows its true value.

Job 28:14 The depths of the oceans and seas Say that wisdom is not found there.

Job 28:15 It cannot be bought with silver or gold.

Job 28:16 The finest gold and jewels Cannot equal its value.

Job 28:17 It is worth more than gold, Than a gold vase or finest glass.

Job 28:18 The value of wisdom is more Than coral or crystal or rubies.

Job 28:19 The finest topaz and the purest gold Cannot compare with the value of wisdom.

Job 28:20 Where, then, is the source of wisdom? Where can we learn to understand?

Job 28:21 No living creature can see it, Not even a bird in flight.

Job 28:22 Even death and destruction Admit they have heard only rumors.

Job 28:23 God alone knows the way, Knows the place where wisdom is found,

Job 28:24 Because he sees the ends of the earth, Sees everything under the sky.

Job 28:25 When God gave the wind its power And determined the size of the sea;

Job 28:26 When God decided where the rain would fall, And the path that the thunderclouds travel;

Job 28:27 It was then he saw wisdom and tested its worth —He gave it his approval.

Job 28:28 God said to us humans, "To be wise, you must have reverence for the Lord. To understand, you must turn from evil."

Job 28:1-28

Job 28 – Job's Discourse on Wisdom

A. Man and the search for material treasure.

1. (1-4) Man seeks after treasure in the earth.

**"Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place *where* gold is refined.**

**Iron is taken from the earth,
And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
Man puts an end to darkness,
And searches every recess
For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.
He breaks open a shaft away from people;
In places forgotten by feet
They hang far away from men;
They swing to and fro.**

a. **Surely there is a mine for silver:** Job considered the way men search for precious and useful metals (such as **silver, gold, iron, and copper**).

i. This chapter and its place in the Book of Job is the source of some controversy. "Most scholars find it impossible to believe that Job ever recited this poem. They find it quite incompatible with what comes before and after." (Andersen)

ii. Yet the poem also seems too calm, too thoughtful, and too reflective to be one of Job's friends. Some scholars think that the poem doesn't belong to the Book of Job at all, and that some later scribe inserted it in the book.

iii. There are two good solutions. The better solution is to simply say that this is indeed Job's work. "Why should it surprise us if Job, having exhausted all other avenues of protest and inquiry, should all at once slip quietly into a more reflective mood and begin meditating on the source of wisdom? Why shouldn't Job grow strangely becalmed here for a time and contemplate his problems from a more traditional perspective?" (Mason)

iv. The other solution is to say that this chapter is the inserted observation of the anonymous author of the Book of Job. Andersen describes this perspective:

"Because we think that Job is a story, we find it appropriate that this interlude is spoken by the storyteller. It sums up the case as it stands at this point. It emphasizes the failure of the human mind to arrive at the hidden wisdom, and so, far from interfering with the Lord's speeches, it lays the foundation for them by showing their necessity."

b. **Searches every recess:** Job explained how men diligently sought after these precious and useful metals. They light up dark places (**Man puts an end to darkness**), they search **every recess**; they dig to break **open a shaft away from people**, and even personally endanger themselves (**they hang far away from men; they swing to and fro**).

i. "This chapter is the oldest and finest piece of *natural history* in the world, and gives us very important information on several curious subjects, and could we ascertain the precise meaning of all the original words, we might, most probably, find out allusions to several useful arts which we are apt to think are of modern, or comparatively modern, invention." (Clarke)

ii. "Careful examination of every reference Job makes to geology or meteorology reveals that there is no significant or insignificant blunder in all he says; every reference is a piece of consummate accuracy." (Chambers)

iii. "The point is that man's intelligence and determination enable him to accomplish amazing feats of technological ingenuity, but left to himself he cannot find wisdom. Wisdom is a treasure rarer than any other." (Smick)

iv. "Those *forgotten* could be explorers far from home, or slaves in the mind." (Andersen)

2. (5-11) *The hidden nature of earth's treasure.*

**As for the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by fire;
Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,
And it contains gold dust.
That path no bird knows,
Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.
The proud lions have not trodden it,
Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.
He puts his hand on the flint;
He overturns the mountains at the roots.
He cuts out channels in the rocks,
And his eye sees every precious thing.
He dams up the streams from trickling;
What is hidden he brings forth to light."**

a. **As for the earth, from it comes bread... its stones are the source of sapphires:** Job continued to paint the picture of the earth as a treasure house of value and riches for those who are willing to work hard and search diligently for these riches.

i. "Above spreads the surface of mother earth, with her waving cornfields, rich with human sustenance. Below, her very entrails are torn and devastated as by flames." (Bradley)

ii. "The *falcon* is celebrated for its vision, the *lion* for its courage. But neither is as observant or as intrepid as man, and neither bird nor beast has access to the remote places that men have penetrated in their lust for treasures." (Andersen)

b. **He puts his hand on the flint; he overturns the mountains... he cuts out channels in the rocks... He dams up the streams:** Job here explained how hard men are willing to work to gain the treasure and wealth that is hidden in the earth.

B. Job explains the value and the source of wisdom.

1. (12-19) *True wisdom is rare.*

**"But where can wisdom be found?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
Man does not know its value,
Nor is it found in the land of the living.
The deep says, '*It is not in me*';
And the sea says, '*It is not with me.*'
It cannot be purchased for gold,
Nor can silver be weighed *for* its price.
It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,
In precious onyx or sapphire.
Neither gold nor crystal can equal it,
Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.
No mention shall be made of coral or quartz,
For the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.
The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
Nor can it be valued in pure gold."**

a. **But where can wisdom be found:** Job here made the point he had built up to in the previous verses. Men search hard and are willing to endure danger for the sake of the riches of this earth, but all of that is *easy* compared to the search for wisdom.

i. "Man doth not see this wisdom but only so far as God is pleased to reveal it to him, and therefore he cannot *declare* it to others; man did not *prepare*, nor *order*, nor *contrive* it, and therefore no wonder if he cannot *search it out*." (Poole)

b. **The deep says, "It is not in me":** Job spoke here of how *rare* wisdom is, making it all the more valuable among men. Indeed, it **cannot be purchased for gold** and is therefore worth more than all of those precious metals.

- i. "The logic of saying in one breath, 'It isn't there, but, even if it were, you couldn't buy it', is often met in the Bible." (Andersen)

2. (20-28) *The source and summary of wisdom.*

**"From where then does wisdom come?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
It is hidden from the eyes of all living,
And concealed from the birds of the air.
Destruction and Death say,
'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'
God understands its way,
And He knows its place.
For He looks to the ends of the earth,
And sees under the whole heavens,
To establish a weight for the wind,
And apportion the waters by measure.
When He made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunderbolt,
Then He saw *wisdom* and declared it;
He prepared it, indeed,
He searched it out.
And to man He said,
'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'"**

a. **From where then does wisdom come:** Job explained how hard it was to find wisdom, and then asked the logical question. Job knew that *he* needed this precious wisdom, and he certainly knew that his *friends* needed this wisdom.

- i. "Sure it is that man, sorry man, knoweth neither the price of Divine wisdom, for it is invaluable; nor the place of it, for it is investigable; nor the order of it, for that is unattainable till we come to heaven." (Trapp)

ii. "He seems to say that, though men should explore the deep places of the earth with all the diligence of miners seeking gold and silver, though they should exert all their mental force, as miners use all their muscular vigor, and though they should employ all the machinery within their reach, as men do who pierce through the rocks in search of precious treasure yet it is not within the range of human labor and skill to attain unto wisdom. That can only be found by another and a higher method; it must come to us by revelation from God, for we cannot find it by our own efforts." (Spurgeon)

b. God understands its way, and He knows its place: Job knew the answer to his own question; he knew that **God** understood wisdom and its source.

i. "This is, indeed, at once our confidence and our comfort – 'God understandeth.' The things that perplex us, do not perplex Him; the mysteries by which we are surrounded, are no mysteries to Him." (Morgan)

ii. "Having shown God as the Source of wisdom, the author now makes his application to man. Man must look to God for wisdom. Man may share in it only through a knowledge of the revealed mind of God." (Smick)

c. To establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure... He made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt: The same God who masters the natural world has the riches of wisdom at His disposal. He has demonstrated His own wisdom and power through the design of the natural world.

d. Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding: Job concluded

this great speech by coming back to the touchstone of *revelation*. Since true wisdom comes from God, it is found by being in right relation to Him (**the fear of the Lord**), and it is shown by a life that does **depart from evil**.

i. Job understood what the later psalmist also understood: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom* (Psa 111:10), an idea also repeated in Pro 9:10; Pro 15:33. If true wisdom can be simply gained by human effort, energy, and ingenuity (like the rare and precious metals of the earth), then the **fear of the Lord** is not essential to obtaining wisdom. But if it comes from God's revelation, then right relationship with Him is the key to wisdom.

ii. Adam Clarke on **to man He said**: "This probably refers to the revelation of his will which God gave to Adam after his fall. He had before sought for *wisdom* in a *forbidden way*. When he and Eve saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes, and *a tree to be desired to make one wise*, they took and did eat,

Gen 3:6. Thus they lost all the *wisdom* that they had, by not setting the *fear of the Lord* before their eyes, and became *foolish, wicked, and miserable*. Hear, then, what God prescribes as a proper remedy for this dire disease: The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; it is thy only wisdom now to set God always before thy eyes, that thou mayest not again transgress."

iii. "The gaining of wisdom requires the total sacrifice of our single most precious possession: ourselves. More specifically, what is required is the surrender of our wills." (Mason)

Job's Summary Defense

Job 29:1 Job began speaking again.

Job 29:2 If only my life could once again be as it was when God watched over me.

Job 29:3 God was always with me then and gave me light as I walked through the darkness.

Job 29:4 Those were the days when I was prosperous, and the friendship of God protected my home.

Job 29:5 Almighty God was with me then, and I was surrounded by all my children.

Job 29:6 My cows and goats gave plenty of milk, and my olive trees grew in the rockiest soil.

Job 29:7 Whenever the city elders met and I took my place among them,

Job 29:8 young men stepped aside as soon as they saw me, and old men stood up to show me respect.

Job 29:9 The leaders of the people would stop talking;

Job 29:10 even the most important men kept silent.

Job 29:11 Everyone who saw me or heard of me had good things to say about what I had done.

Job 29:12 When the poor cried out, I helped them; I gave help to orphans who had nowhere to turn.

Job 29:13 People who were in deepest misery praised me, and I helped widows find security.

Job 29:14 I have always acted justly and fairly.

Job 29:15 I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame.

Job 29:16 I was like a father to the poor and took the side of strangers in trouble.

Job 29:17 I destroyed the power of cruel men and rescued their victims.

Job 29:18 I always expected to live a long life and to die at home in comfort.

Job 29:19 I was like a tree whose roots always have water and whose branches are wet with dew.

Job 29:20 Everyone was always praising me, and my strength never failed me.

Job 29:21 When I gave advice, people were silent and listened carefully to what I said;

Job 29:22 they had nothing to add when I had finished. My words sank in like drops of rain;

Job 29:23 everyone welcomed them just as farmers welcome rain in spring.

Job 29:24 I smiled on them when they had lost confidence; my cheerful face encouraged them.

Job 29:25 I took charge and made the decisions; I led them as a king leads his troops, and gave them comfort in their despair.

Job 29:1-25

Job 29 – Job Remembers Better Days

A. Job's blessed relationships.

1. (1-6) Job was blessed in his relationship with God.

Job further continued his discourse, and said:

**"Oh, that I were as *in* months past,
As *in* the days *when* God watched over me;
When His lamp shone upon my head,
And *when* by His light I walked *through* darkness;
Just as I was in the days of my prime,
When the friendly counsel of God *was* over my tent;
When the Almighty *was* yet with me,
When my children *were* around me;
When my steps were bathed with cream,
And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!"**

a. **Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me:** Job longed not only for the days before he lost his children and health and wealth; he especially longed for the days before he lost

his sense of God's closeness. There was a time when he felt that **God watched over** him, and those days were gone.

i. "His keenest sorrow is discovered. It was that of the feeling that, in some way, and for some reason, God no longer watched over him." (Morgan)

ii. **Job further continued his discourse:** "Probably, after a pause, Job resumed his speech. This second address was not so much an answer to his friends as a statement of his whole case as he saw it." (Morgan)

b. **When His lamp shone upon my head... when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent... when the Almighty was yet with me:** Job fondly remembered the days when it seemed that God was *for* him rather than *against* him. It reminds us of the fact that Job's great crisis after his catastrophic losses was primarily *spiritual*, in that he did not sense the support and succor of God in the aftermath of his loss.

i. "It is a great thing for a man to be near to God; it is a very choice privilege to be admitted into the inner circle of communion, and to become God's familiar friend. Great as the privilege is, so great is the loss of it. No darkness is so dark as that which falls on eyes accustomed to the light." (Spurgeon)

ii. Spurgeon went on to describe the ways that Job sensed this great loss from God.

- "First, he complains that he had lost the consciousness of divine *preservation*" (**as in the days when God watched over me**).
- "Job had also lost divine *consolation*, for he looks back with lamentation to the time when God's candle shone upon his head" (**when His lamp shone upon my head**).

- “Moreover, Job deplored the loss of divine *illumination*. ‘By his light,’ he says, ‘I walked through darkness,’ that is to say, perplexity ceased to be perplexity” (**by His light I walked through darkness**).

- “Moreover, Job had lost divine *communion*: so it seems, for he mourned the days of his youth, when the secret of God was upon his tabernacle” (**when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent**).

c. **When my children were around me; when my steps were bathed with cream, and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me:** Job painted a beautiful (if exaggerated) picture of his former happy life. He genuinely felt that he was in fellowship with God and the blessing flowed in to every area of his life.

2. (7-17) *Job was blessed in the relationships with people.*

**“When I went out to the gate by the city,
When I took my seat in the open square,
The young men saw me and hid,
And the aged arose *and* stood;
The princes refrained from talking,
And put *their* hand on their mouth;
The voice of nobles was hushed,
And their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.
When the ear heard, then it blessed me,
And when the eye saw, then it approved me;
Because I delivered the poor who cried out,
The fatherless and *the one who* had no helper.
The blessing of a perishing *man* came upon me,
And I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.
I *was* eyes to the blind,
And I *was* feet to the lame.**

**I was a father to the poor,
And I searched out the case *that* I did not know.
I broke the fangs of the wicked,
And plucked the victim from his teeth."**

a. **I went out the gate... I took my seat in the open square:** In this and the following verses, Job remembered how greatly he was respected in the community. He had a position of community leadership and was feared by the **young men** and honored by the **aged**. Even **princes** and **nobles** stopped talking and listened to him.

i. "We have no idea what this city was, but any city that had a gate and a public square was a major urban center." (Smick)

b. **When the ear heard, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw, then it approved me:** Not only did Job gain the attention of the people and leaders of the city in days past; they also *liked* him and what he had to say. He was **blessed** and **approved** by those who heard him.

c. **Because I delivered the poor who cried out... I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy... I was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame:** Job described how his reputation for wisdom and goodness was *deserved*. He was a man full of good and noble works, especially to the poor and disadvantaged.

i. It reminds us that though Job was a man of great wealth and influence (Job 1:1-3), he used his wealth and influence to do good, instead of simply being greedy and selfish with his wealth.

ii. "In Job's conscience, sins are not just wrong things people do, disobeying known laws of God or society; to omit to do good to any fellow human being, of

whatever rank or class, would be a grievous offence to God." (Andersen)

iii. "It was not ambition, popularity, or self-interest that put Job upon these and the following good practices and proceedings, but the care he had of discharging his trust, and the pure love he bare to justice and upright dealing." (Trapp)

iv. "Not once before this has he pointed to any of his good deeds as evidence of his faith, but rather he has taken his stand squarely upon faith alone and not upon works. The fact that Job waited so long to introduce any hard evidence into this debate with his friends shows enormous restraint on his part." (Mason)

B. Job reflects on former times.

1. (18-20) Job's former sense of security and confidence.

**"Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest,
And multiply *my* days as the sand.
My root *is* spread out to the waters,
And the dew lies all night on my branch.
My glory *is* fresh within me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.'"**

a. **I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand:** In his former confidence, Job felt that he would die happy and secure in his **nest** after a good, long life.

i. Smick mentions an unlikely approach taken by some translators, thinking that Job made a reference to the mythical creature known as the phoenix in Job 29:18 : "Some translators accept the old rabbinic opinion that the second half of the line speaks of the phoenix. The question seems to hinge on whether the word *hol* (usually 'sand') can mean 'phoenix' at all."

b. **My root is spread out to the waters... My glory is fresh within me:** We can sense Job's prior sense of blessing and abundance of life. His former blessed life made his present crisis all the more unbearable and seemingly unjust.

i. **Root is spread out to the waters:** "A metaphor taken from a healthy tree growing beside a rivulet where there is plenty of water; which in consequence flourishes in *all seasons*, its leaf does not *wither*, nor its fruit *fall off*. See Psa 1:3; Jer 17:8." (Clarke)

2. (21-25) *Job's former authority and leadership in the community.*

**"Men listened to me and waited,
And kept silence for my counsel.
After my words they did not speak again,
And my speech settled on them as dew.
They waited for me as for the rain,
And they opened their mouth wide as for the spring rain.
If I mocked at them, they did not believe it,
And the light of my countenance they did not cast down.
I chose the way for them, and sat as chief;
So I dwelt as a king in the army,
As one who comforts mourners."**

a. **Men listened to me and waited... After my words they did not speak again:** Job again remembered how greatly he was respected and esteemed in the community. He was a man honored for his wise words.

i. Even if Job had **mocked at them**, then **they did not believe it**. "*They believed it not*; it was so acceptable to them to see me well pleased with them, that they could scarce believe their eyes and ears that it was so." (Poole)

b. **I chose the way for them, and sat as chief:** This highlights the tremendous contrast between the former esteem Job enjoyed and the terrible criticism he had endured from his friends. There was a time when no one would have criticized Job the way his friends now did.

i. Job is also a tremendous example of how a wealthy and powerful man should live his life; not in selfish indulgence, but in care and concern for the less fortunate. "Noble Job! Look at him, ye *nobles* of the earth, ye lieutenants of counties, ye generals of armies, and ye lords of provinces. Look at Job! Imitate his active benevolence, and be healthy and happy. Be as guardian angels in your particular districts, blessing all by your example and your bounty. Send your *hunting horses* to the plough, your *game cocks* to the *dunghill*; and at last live like *men* and *Christians*." (Clarke)

Job 30:1 But men younger than I am make fun of me now! Their fathers have always been so worthless that I wouldn't let them help my dogs guard sheep.

Job 30:2 They were a bunch of worn-out men, too weak to do any work for me.

Job 30:3 They were so poor and hungry that they would gnaw dry roots—at night, in wild, desolate places.

Job 30:4 They pulled up the plants of the desert and ate them, even the tasteless roots of the broom tree!

Job 30:5 Everyone drove them away with shouts, as if they were shouting at thieves.

Job 30:6 They had to live in caves, in holes dug in the sides of cliffs.

Job 30:7 Out in the wilds they howled like animals and huddled together under the bushes.

Job 30:8 A worthless bunch of nameless nobodies! They were driven out of the land.

Job 30:9 Now they come and laugh at me; I am nothing but a joke to them.

Job 30:10 They treat me with disgust; they think they are too good for me, and even come and spit in my face.

Job 30:11 Because God has made me weak and helpless, they turn against me with all their fury.

Job 30:12 This mob attacks me head-on; they send me running; they prepare their final assault.

Job 30:13 They cut off my escape and try to destroy me; and there is no one to stop them.

Job 30:14 They pour through the holes in my defenses and come crashing down on top of me;

Job 30:15 I am overcome with terror; my dignity is gone like a puff of wind, and my prosperity like a cloud.

Job 30:16 Now I am about to die; there is no relief for my suffering.

Job 30:17 At night my bones all ache; the pain that gnaws me never stops.

Job 30:18 God seizes me by my collar and twists my clothes out of shape.

Job 30:19 He throws me down in the mud; I am no better than dirt.

Job 30:20 I call to you, O God, but you never answer; and when I pray, you pay no attention.

Job 30:21 You are treating me cruelly; you persecute me with all your power.

Job 30:22 You let the wind blow me away; you toss me about in a raging storm.

Job 30:23 I know you are taking me off to my death, to the fate in store for everyone.

Job 30:24 Why do you attack a ruined man, one who can do nothing but beg for pity?

Job 30:25 Didn't I weep with people in trouble and feel sorry for those in need?

Job 30:26 I hoped for happiness and light, but trouble and darkness came instead.

Job 30:27 I am torn apart by worry and pain; I have had day after day of suffering.

Job 30:28 I go about in gloom, without any sunshine; I stand up in public and plead for help.

Job 30:29 My voice is as sad and lonely as the cries of a jackal or an ostrich.

Job 30:30 My skin has turned dark; I am burning with fever.

Job 30:31 Where once I heard joyful music, now I hear only mourning and weeping.

Job 30:1-31

Job 30 – Job Reflects on His Current Misery

A. Job's loss of respect in the community.

1. (1-8) The low character of the men who now mock Job.

**"But now they mock at me, *men* younger than I,
Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.**

Indeed, what *profit* is the strength of their hands to me?

Their vigor has perished.

***They are* gaunt from want and famine,
Fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate and waste,
Who pluck mallow by the bushes,
And broom tree roots *for* their food.**

**They were driven out from among *men*,
They shouted at them as *at* a thief.**

***They had* to live in the clefts of the valleys,
In caves of the earth and the rocks.**

**Among the bushes they brayed,
Under the nettles they nestled.
They were sons of fools,
Yes, sons of vile men;
They were scourged from the land."**

a. Now they mock at me, men younger than I, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock: Job was tortured by the irony of it all. The sons of men whom Job would not even put with the **dogs of his flock** were now his mockers and critics.

i. "Not confidential enough to be made shepherds, ass-keepers, or camel-drivers; nor even to have the care of the dogs by which the flocks were guarded. This saying is what we call an expression of *sovereign contempt*." (Clarke)

ii. "Dogs are every where mentioned with contempt, as filthy, unprofitable, and accursed creatures; as 2Sa 16:9; 2Ki 8:13; Php 3:2; Rev 22:15." (Poole)

b. They are gaunt from want and famine... They had to live in the clefts of the valleys... They were the sons of fools: Job thought of what worthless men were now his loud critics, and how unjust it all was.

i. "This lengthy description of these good-for-nothing fathers is a special brand of rhetoric... To define every facet of their debauchery, to state it in six different ways, is not meant to glory in it but to heighten the pathetic nature of his dishonor." (Smick)

2. (9-15) The mocking Job must endure.

**"And now I am their taunting song;
Yes, I am their byword.
They abhor me, they keep far from me;
They do not hesitate to spit in my face.
Because He has loosed my bowstring and afflicted**

me,
They have cast off restraint before me.
At *my right hand* the rabble arises;
They push away my feet,
And they raise against me their ways of destruction.
They break up my path,
They promote my calamity;
They have no helper.
They come as broad breakers;
Under the ruinous storm they roll along.
Terrors are turned upon me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed like a cloud."

a. **I am their taunting song; yes I am their byword:**
Job was now low in the eyes of these worthless men.

i. "He did not slink out of town; he was run out on a rail. Why else would he be sitting on an ash heap and scraping his pustules with a shard of pottery? Obviously his neighbors had forcibly removed him to quarantine in the town dump, where he would have been exposed to more disease, to the elements, to rats and lice – and worst of all, perhaps, to further public humiliation." (Mason)

b. **Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my honor as the wind, and my prosperity has passed like a cloud:** Job mourned the agony of his present state of being despised among men, when before he was respected and honored. His **honor** and **prosperity** had vanished.

i. **They come as broad breakers; under the ruinous storm they roll along:** "Verse 14 is very vivid. Job thought of himself as a city with a wide, gapping breach in its wall. The stones come crashing down, and amid the rubble the instruments of siege

warfare roll through. The tranquility and dignity he had so enjoyed have vanished like a cloud." (Smick)

B. Job's present misery.

1. (16-23) *The misery of his present pain, both spiritual and physical.*

**"And now my soul is poured out because of my *plight*;
The days of affliction take hold of me.
My bones are pierced in me at night,
And my gnawing pains take no rest.
By great force my garment is disfigured;
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.
He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes."**

**"I cry out to You, but You do not answer me;
I stand up, and You regard me.
But You have become cruel to me;
With the strength of Your hand You oppose me.
You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride *on it*;
You spoil my success.
For I know *that* You will bring me *to death*,
And *to* the house appointed for all living."**

a. **And now my soul is poured out because of my *plight*:** Job again described his present crisis. He described the persistent, **gnawing pains** that were ever with him; but for him it was *first* a crisis of the **soul**.

b. **My bones are pierced... my gnawing pains take no rest... my garment is disfigured:** With poetic power and eloquence, Job described the *physical* agony of his suffering.

i. The New Living Translation has a helpful rendering of Job 30:18-19 : *In his great power God clutches at my clothing; he grabs me by the collar of my coat. He throws me into the mud.*

ii. "In a final burst of grief, Job wrestles with the sheer pain of his disease as if it were objectively a terrifying monster, chewing at his flesh day and night." (Andersen)

iii. Mason commented on the long and intense struggle Job had with God, and on the ultimate outcome for Job: "Classically there are two ways of soliciting the favor of God. One way is by trying very hard to be very very good and hoping that God will take notice. The other way is to beg God for His blessing and to refuse to let Him off the hook until He comes through... It is those who refuse to give up on God who end up with His blessing."

c. **I cry out to You, but You do not answer me:** This was the worst aspect of Job's suffering, *the sense that God had forsaken him*. He undeniably felt that God was *against* him (**with the strength of Your hand You oppose me... You spoil my success**). Indeed, Job felt that God wanted to and would destroy him (**I know that You will bring me to death**).

i. "God's constant attack, his ruthless might (Job 30:21), was so completely the opposite of Job's 'intimate friendship' with God in those bygone days when he had still perceived that God was on his side (Job 29:4-5)."

 (Smick)

ii. **I know that You will bring me to death:** "Under depression of spirit he felt sure that he must very soon die; he feared that God would not relax the blows of his hand until his body became a ruin, and then he would have rest. But he did not die at that time. He was fully recovered, and God gave him twice as much as he had before. A life of usefulness, and happiness, and honor lay before him; and yet he had

set up his own tombstone, and reckoned himself a dead man." (Spurgeon)

2. (24-31) *The misery of the injustice done to Job.*

**"Surely He would not stretch out *His* hand against a heap of ruins,
If they cry out when He destroys *it*.
Have I not wept for him who was in trouble?
Has *not* my soul grieved for the poor?
But when I looked for good, evil came *to me*;
And when I waited for light, then came darkness.
My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest;
Days of affliction confront me.
I go about mourning, but not in the sun;
I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help.
I am a brother of jackals,
And a companion of ostriches.
My skin grows black and falls from me;
My bones burn with fever.
My harp is *turned* to mourning,
And my flute to the voice of those who weep."**

a. **Surely He would not stretch out His hand against a heap of ruins:** Job felt, "God, you are more merciful than this. You would not afflict a pitiful **heap of ruins** if only it would **cry out** to You." Job wondered why God did not respond to *his* cries.

i. "The supreme sorrow was that when he cried to God, there was no answer. He claimed that in such suffering as he endured, there was ample justification for all his complaining." (Morgan)

ii. "As is our natural tendency, Job misinterprets God's silence as lack of concern and indifference. Job assumes that God's silence means God's displeasure." (Lawson)

b. Have I not wept for him who was in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor: Job wondered why God did not treat him with the same kindness he had often shown to others.

i. "It is impossible to read this section without feeling that protest was approaching revolt in the soul of this man. He did definitely charge God with cruelty (see verse 21), and his questions, 'Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the needy?' (verse 25), he was contrasting God's attitude toward him with his own attitude toward suffering men in the days of his prosperity and strength." (Morgan)

ii. The sensitive soul of Job was another demonstration of his godliness, and appropriate for any servant of God. "I know that a man in the ministry who cannot feel had much better resign his office. We have heard some hold forth the doctrines of grace, as if they were a nauseous medicine, and men were to be forced to drink thereof by hard words and violent abuse. We have always thought that such men did more hurt than good, for while seeking to vindicate the letter, they evidently missed the spirit of the faith once delivered unto the saints. Cold and impassive are some of our divines; they utter truth as though it were no concern of theirs whether men received it or not. To such men heaven and hell, death and eternity, are mere themes for oratory, but not subjects for emotion." (Spurgeon)

c. My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest: Perhaps Job *tried* to just take it easy and not get so troubled over his problems, but for him it was impossible. His physical and spiritual agony was more than it seemed he could bear, or his friends could relate to.

i. "By my mournful and continual cry I resemble the *jackals* or *hyenas*... To the *daughters of howling*: generally understood to be the *ostrich*; for both the *jackal* and the *female ostrich* are remarkable for their mournful cry, and for their attachment to desolate places. - *Dodd*." (Clarke)

Job's Final Appeal

Job 31:1 I have made a solemn promise never to look with lust at a woman.

Job 31:2 What does Almighty God do to us? How does he repay human deeds?

Job 31:3 He sends disaster and ruin to those who do wrong.

Job 31:4 God knows everything I do; he sees every step I take.

Job 31:5 I swear I have never acted wickedly and never tried to deceive others.

Job 31:6 Let God weigh me on honest scales, and he will see how innocent I am.

Job 31:7 If I have turned from the right path or let myself be attracted to evil, if my hands are stained with sin,

Job 31:8 then let my crops be destroyed, or let others eat the food I grow.

Job 31:9 If I have been attracted to my neighbor's wife, and waited, hidden, outside her door,

Job 31:10 then let my wife cook another man's food and sleep in another man's bed.

Job 31:11 Such wickedness should be punished by death.

Job 31:12 It would be like a destructive, hellish fire, consuming everything I have.

Job 31:13 When any of my servants complained against me, I would listen and treat them fairly.

Job 31:14 If I did not, how could I then face God? What could I say when God came to judge me?

Job 31:15 The same God who created me created my servants also.

Job 31:16 I have never refused to help the poor; never have I let widows live in despair

Job 31:17 or let orphans go hungry while I ate.

Job 31:18 All my life I have taken care of them.

Job 31:19 When I found someone in need, too poor to buy clothes,

Job 31:20 I would give him clothing made of wool that had come from my own flock of sheep. Then he would praise me with all his heart.

Job 31:21 If I have ever cheated an orphan, knowing I could win in court,

Job 31:22 then may my arms be broken; may they be torn from my shoulders.

Job 31:23 Because I fear God's punishment, I could never do such a thing.

Job 31:24 I have never trusted in riches

Job 31:25 or taken pride in my wealth.

Job 31:26 I have never worshiped the sun in its brightness or the moon in all its beauty.

Job 31:27 I have not been led astray to honor them by kissing my hand in reverence to them.

Job 31:28 Such a sin should be punished by death; it denies Almighty God.

Job 31:29 I have never been glad when my enemies suffered, or pleased when they met with disaster;

Job 31:30 I never sinned by praying for their death.

Job 31:31 All those who work for me know that I have always welcomed strangers.

Job 31:32 I invited travelers into my home and never let them sleep in the streets.

Job 31:33 Others try to hide their sins, but I have never concealed mine.

Job 31:34 I have never feared what people would say; I have never kept quiet or stayed indoors because I feared their scorn.

Job 31:35 Will no one listen to what I am saying? I swear that every word is true. Let Almighty God answer me. If the charges my opponent brings against me were written down so that I could see them,

Job 31:36 I would wear them proudly on my shoulder and place them on my head like a crown.

Job 31:37 I would tell God everything I have done, and hold my head high in his presence.

Job 31:38 If I have stolen the land I farm and taken it from its rightful owners—

Job 31:39 if I have eaten the food that grew there but let the farmers that grew it starve—

Job 31:40 then instead of wheat and barley, may weeds and thistles grow. The words of Job are ended.

Job 31:1-40

Job 31 – Job Proclaims His Purity and Innocence

"This whole chapter is occupied with Job's solemn oath of innocence. It was his final and explicit answer to the line of argument adopted by his three friends." (G. Campbell Morgan)

A. Job proclaims his innocence

1. (1-4) He was not guilty of lust.

**"I have made a covenant with my eyes;
Why then should I look upon a young woman?"**

**For what *is* the allotment of God from above,
And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high?
Is it not destruction for the wicked,
And disaster for the workers of iniquity?
Does He not see my ways,
And count all my steps?"**

a. I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman: In this section, Job protested that he was a godly and blameless man, at least on a human scale. His larger context was to explain the sense of injustice he felt at his suffering and humiliation, and to make a final defense before his friends who accused him of special sin deserving of special judgment.

i. This chapter has an interesting similarity to ancient "defense documents." "The material is similar in form, if not in content, to the negative confession given by the deceased who stands before Osiris in the Egyptian Book of the Dead... Under oath the subject lists the evil things he has not done with the hope he will be vindicated and pass through the portals unscathed." (Smick)

ii. "It is an oath of clearance in the form of a negative confession. The procedure was well known in ancient jurisprudence. A crime could be disowned by calling down a curse on oneself if one had committed it." (Andersen)

iii. Yet it also has a clear connection to the Sermon on the Mount. "Chapter 31 is Job's Sermon on the Mount, for in it he touches on many of the same issues of spiritual ethics that Jesus covers in Matthew 5-7, including the relationship between lust and adultery (Job 31:1; Job 31:9-12), loving one's neighbor as oneself (Job 31:13-15), almsgiving and

social justice (Job 31:16-23), and the love of money and other idolatries (Job 31:24-28).” (Mason)

iv. We are clearly told in Job 1 that Job was a blameless and upright man; this is the chapter that *most clearly explains what that godly life looked like*. “The chapter that we now open breathes, almost or quite throughout, a spirit that belongs rather to the New than to the Old Covenant. It is a practical anticipation of much of the teaching that was to come from Him Who ‘sat down and taught’ His disciples on the mountain. It is the picture of one *perfect and upright, who feared God, and eschewed evil*.” (Bradley)

b. I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman: In defending his righteous life, Job began with explaining that he was a morally pure man who did not **look upon a young woman** in impure and inappropriate ways.

i. It is significant that in this long section where Job explained his righteous life, he *began* with noting that he guarded his **eyes** from lustful looks **upon a young woman**. This rightly suggests that a man’s ability to *not* look upon lustful images is an important indicator of his general righteousness and blamelessness.

ii. This also suggests that the **eyes** are a gateway for lust, especially for men. This is demonstrated over and over again by both personal experience and empirical study. When a man places enticing, sensual, lust-inducing images before his **eyes**, it is a form of foreplay, especially considering that it often or frequently causes some level of sexual arousal in the man.

iii. “In Hebrew the same word signifieth both an eye and a fountain; to show, saith one, that from the eye,

as a fountain, floweth both sin and misery.” (Trapp)

iv. “Lustfully consider her beauty, till my heart be hot as an oven with lawless lusts, and my body be moiled with that abominable filth... Look upon the woeful chain of David’s lust, and remember how many died of the wound in the eye.” (Trapp)

c. **A covenant with my eyes:** Job’s ability to control himself was connected with a **covenant** he made. He made a vow, a promise, a commitment *with his own eyes* that he would not look upon a **young woman** in a sinful way.

i. Bullinger says that the Hebrew does not literally say that Job made **a covenant with his eyes**. “Not ‘made with’... The covenant here was made with God, against his eyes, which are regarded as an enemy likely to lead him astray.”

ii. “When Job says that he has made a covenant with his eyes to abstain from lust, he does not mean that he has stopped experiencing lust altogether. What he means is that he refuses to dwell upon the lustful feelings which, as the normal red-blooded male he is, come to him very naturally.” (Mason)

iii. Job insisted that he would not look upon a **young woman** – a *maiden* in this way. This was especially meaningful, because in that culture it would be somewhat accepted for a rich and powerful man like Job to seduce or ravish a maiden, and then add her as either a wife or a concubine. Job restrained himself from women that others in his same circumstances *would not* restrain themselves from.

iv. “He restrained himself from the very thoughts and desires of filthiness with such persons, wherewith the generality of men allowed themselves to commit gross

fornication, as deeming it to be either none, or but a very little sin." (Poole)

d. **For what is the allotment of God from above:** In the context of Job's self-control when it came to lust, he considered what **the allotment of God from above** was. He understood that the **young woman** he would be enticed to look upon was not **the allotment of God** for him; she and her nakedness did not belong to Job in any sense.

i. Lev 18:1-18 reinforces this Biblical principle. It relates how the *nakedness* of an individual "belongs" to that individual and to their spouse, and it does not "belong" to anyone else. Therefore, when a man looks upon the nakedness of a woman who is not his wife, he takes something that does not belong to him.

ii. There certainly existed *some* type of pornography in Job's day; some of the earliest artistic images are of women and men in highly sexualized motifs. Nevertheless, Job certainly did not have to contend with the sophisticated, gigantic, and far-reaching modern pornography industry. The availability of modern pornography has made it a significantly greater challenge for men to confine their visual arousal to **the allotment of God from above** for them.

iii. In this context, it is helpful for a man to ask himself: "Whose nakedness belongs to me, and whose does not?" Only a proud and depraved man would think that *every* woman's nakedness belongs to him. A moment of thought reinforces the clear principle: only the nakedness of his own wife is **the allotment of God from above** for a man; only his own wife is **the inheritance of the Almighty from on high** for his visual arousal.

iv. "Hereby we plainly see that the command of Christ, Mat 5:29, was no new command peculiar to the gospel, as some would have it, but the very same which the law of God revealed in his word, and written in men's hearts by nature." (Poole)

e. **Is it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for the workers of iniquity:** In the context of Job's self-control when it came to lust, he also considered the *destructive nature* of allowing one's self to be aroused by alluring images. He perhaps considered the lives of others that had been destroyed by lust and sexual sin that began with visual arousal.

i. "For in those days, he knew well, he tells us, that God had assigned his heaviest judgments as the sure inheritance of those who infringed that noble law of purity which lifts man above the brute." (Bradley)

ii. The potential for **destruction** is all the more real in the modern world, because the challenges to Biblical purity are all the more formidable. Using very rough estimates, we can, compare the world of a man in the year a.d. 1500 to the world a.d. 2000:

- In 1500 the average age of a man's economic independence was 16; today it is 26.
- In 1500 the average age of marriage for a man was 18; today it is 28 (or more).
- In 1500 the average age of male puberty was 20; today it is 12.

iii. "The ruin of impure souls is infallible, unsupportable, unavoidable; if God hath aversion from all other sinners, he hath hatred and horror for the unchaste; such stinking goats shall be set on the left hand, and sent to hell; where they shall have so much the more of punishment as they had here of

sensual and sinful pleasure, as sour sauce to their sweet meats." (Trapp)

iv. This means that there are many biological, cultural, economic, social, and technological factors that make it much more difficult for a man today to make **a covenant** with his **eyes** to not **look upon a young woman** in the sense meant here by Job. It is much more difficult for a man to choose satisfaction with **the allotment of God from above** and to avoid the **destruction** and **disaster** Job spoke of. Nevertheless, by the power of God's Spirit *it can be done*, and obedience to God in this arena is a precious, wonderful sacrifice made unto Him; a genuine way to present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto Him, not being conformed to the world (Rom 12:1-2).

f. **Does He not see all my ways, and count all my steps:** In the context of Job's self-control when it came to lust, it was helpful for him to consider that *God's eye was upon him all the time*. Most men indulge in ungodly visual arousal with the (at least temporary) delusion that their conduct is unseen by God. It helped Job to know that God did **see all** his **ways**.

2. (5-8) *He was not guilty of falsehood.*

**"If I have walked with falsehood,
Or if my foot has hastened to deceit,
Let me be weighed on honest scales,
That God may know my integrity.
If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart walked after my eyes,
Or if any spot adheres to my hands,
Then let me sow, and another eat;
Yes, let my harvest be rooted out."**

a. **If I have walked with falsehood:** Job also proclaimed his blameless life because he lived an essentially

truthful life. He was not afraid to **be weighed on honest scales**, and have his life examined in an honest way.

i. "The self-curse of crop failure (Job 31:8) suggests that verse 5 refers to shady business practices." (Andersen)

b. **If my step has turned from the way... Then let me sow, and another eat:** Job was not afraid to call a curse upon himself, if he indeed was not an honest man. He was willing to be deprived of the fruit of his own labor if it was true that he was found lacking on the **honest scales** of God's judgment.

i. The confidence Job had in calling curses upon himself if he were not truthful is impressive. It is as if he said to his friends, "Do you think that I am trying to make out before God that I am what I have not been? Would I talk to God with what would be blatant insolence if I had not the facts to back me up?" (Chambers)

3. (9-12) *He was not an adulterer.*

**"If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door,
Then let my wife grind for another,
And let others bow down over her.
For that *would be* wickedness;
Yes, it *would be* iniquity *deserving of* judgment.
For that *would be* a fire *that* consumes to destruction,
And would root out all my increase."**

a. **If my heart has been enticed by a woman:** The next area of integrity Job proclaimed had to do with

faithfulness to his wife within the marriage. He understood that this had more than a sexual aspect (perhaps first mentioned in Job 31:1-4), but also included the **heart** being **enticed**.

i. Job touched upon a significant truth; that it is entirely possible to *allow* one's **heart** to be **enticed** by another. These things happen because of choices one makes, not merely because one has been acted upon by the mystical or magical power of romantic love.

ii. Instead, Job insisted that for him to have his heart **enticed** by another **would be wickedness**, and indeed **it would be iniquity deserving of judgment**. He understood that he had *control* over whom he would allow his heart to be enticed by.

iii. "The phrase is very emphatical, taking from himself and others the vain excuses wherewith men use to palliate their sins, by pretending that they did not design the wickedness, but were merely drawn in and seduced by the strong enticements and provocations of others; all which Job supposeth, and yet nevertheless owns the great guilt of such practices even in that case, as well knowing that temptation to sin is no justification of it." (Poole)

b. **Then let my wife grind for another:** Job insisted that if he had been unfaithful in heart or in action towards his wife, then he would deserve to have his wife taken from him and given to another.

i. "Let her be his slave... or rather, let her be his whore; and may my sin, which hath served her for example, serve her also for excuse." (Trapp)

ii. "*Let others bow down upon her*; another modest expression of a filthy action; whereby the Holy Ghost

gives us a pattern and a precept to avoid not only unclean actions, but also all immodest expressions.” (Poole)

iii. “Job is so conscious of his own innocence, that he is willing it should be put to the utmost proof; and if found guilty, that he may be exposed to the most distressing and humiliating punishment, even to that of being deprived of his goods, bereaved of his children, his wife made a *slave*, and subjected to all indignities in that state.” (Clarke)

c. **For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction:** Job also understood that allowing his heart to be enticed by a woman other than his wife would bring a destructive, burned-over result.

i. **And root out all my increase:** Many men who feel themselves under oppressive alimony or child support payments *because* they allowed their hearts to be enticed by another woman have lived this statement by Job and have seen all their **increase** rooted out.

ii. In this we can see that Job was tempted to adultery but resisted the temptation. “The devil’s fire fell upon wet tinder; and if he knocked at Job’s door, there was nobody at home to look out at the window and let him in; for he considered the punishment both human, Job 31:11, and divine, Job 31:12, due to this great wickedness.” (Trapp)

4. (13-15) *He did not treat his servants cruelly.*

“If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant

When they complained against me,

What then shall I do when God rises up?

When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?

**Did not He who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?"**

a. **If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant:** Job continued the presentation of his own righteousness by noting the good and compassionate treatment of his servants. The goodness of a man or a woman is often best indicated by how they treat those thought to be *inferior* to them, not how they treat their peers or those thought to be superior to them.

b. **What then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes, how shall I answer Him:** One reason Job treated his servants well was because he understood that he would have to answer to God for his actions towards others, including his servants. He understood that **God** cared about his servants and would avenge ill-treatment of them.

i. "This section embodies a human ethic unmatched in the ancient world." (Andersen)

ii. Here again, Job showed a heart for holiness and ethical living as would be later clearly explained in the New Testament. Paul gave much the same idea in Eph 6:9, where he told masters to treat their servants well: *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

c. **Did not He who made me in the womb make them:** Another reason Job treated his servants well was because he recognized their essential humanity. This was both remarkable and admirable in a time when it was almost universally understood that servants and slaves were subhuman next to those whom they served.

i. "Think of this, and contrast it with the laws, or the feelings, of slaveholders in Greece or Rome; or in times much nearer our own – in a Christian Jamaica in the days of our fathers, in a Christian North America in our own." (Bradley, writing in 1886)

5. (16-23) *He did not victimize the poor or the weak.*

**"If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
Or eaten my morsel by myself,
So that the fatherless could not eat of it
(But from my youth I reared him as a father,
And from my mother's womb I guided *the widow*);
If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
Or any poor *man* without covering;
If his heart has not blessed me,
And *if* he was *not* warmed with the fleece of my
sheep;
If I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
When I saw I had help in the gate;
Then let my arm fall from my shoulder,
Let my arm be torn from the socket.
For destruction *from* God *is* a terror to me,
And because of His magnificence I cannot endure."**

a. **If I have kept the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail:** As a further testimony to his righteousness, Job insisted that he had been good and kind to the **poor** and to the helpless (such as the **widow** and the **fatherless**).

b. **If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing... Then let my arm fall from my shoulder:** In the same manner as before, Job called for a curse upon himself if it was true that *he had not* cared for the poor and helpless as he claimed he had. He knew that if he had been cruel and oppressive to the poor and needy,

that he would indeed *deserve* punishment, and this was part of his motivation to care the way that he did (**for destruction from God is a terror to me**).

i. "Most of the good deeds that Job presents as evidence of his righteousness are simple, ordinary things... More than any one of these acts alone, it is the accumulation of them that is impressive." (Mason)

6. (24-28) *He was not greedy or a seeker of false gods.*

**"If I have made gold my hope,
Or said to fine gold, 'You are my confidence';
If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great,
And because my hand had gained much;
If I have observed the sun when it shines,
Or the moon moving *in* brightness,
So that my heart has been secretly enticed,
And my mouth has kissed my hand;
This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment,
For I would have denied God *who is* above."**

a. **If I have made gold my hope:** Job knew that wealthy men often found it easy to trust in riches. Therefore, he again insisted that he had not made riches his **hope** or his **confidence**, and also had not **rejoiced because** his **wealth was great**.

b. **If I have observed the sun when it shines:** Job meant that he had not engaged in the common practice of sun worship. His **heart** was not **secretly enticed** to idolatry, which was apparently sometimes worshipped with the kissing of the hand.

i. **If I have observed the sun:** "Not simply, nor only with admiration; (for it is a glorious work of God, which we ought to contemplate and admire;) but for the end here following, or so as to ascribe to it the honour peculiar to God." (Poole)

ii. "And when the idols were out of the reach of idolaters, that they could not kiss them, they used to kiss their hands, and, as it were, to throw kisses at them; of which we have many examples in heathen writers." (Poole)

c. **This also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, for I would have denied God who is above:** It is probable (though not certain) that Job wrote this before any of the other received books of Scripture were given. Therefore, he knew that idolatry was wrong by both *natural revelation* and by *conscience*. He knew that since there was a true, living God enthroned in the heavens, it was **an iniquity deserving of judgment** to deny the **God who is above** and to worship any other.

7. (29-34) *He was generally without blame.*

**"If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me,
Or lifted myself up when evil found him
(Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for a curse on his soul);
If the men of my tent have not said,
'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?'
(But no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler);
If I have covered my transgressions as Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
Because I feared the great multitude,
And dreaded the contempt of families,
So that I kept silence
And did not go out of the door;**

a. **If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me:** As further testimony to his personal righteousness, Job claimed that he had not been happy

when his enemies had suffered and been destroyed. This is certainly one mark of a man after God's heart, who also takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked (Eze 33:11)

b. **By asking for a curse on his soul:** Job did not even curse his enemies. He kept himself from this most natural reaction.

c. **No sojourner had to lodge in the street:** Job was also a diligent man when it came to hospitality. He would not allow a visitor to sleep on the street and instead he **opened his doors to the traveler.**

d. **If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding iniquity in my bosom:** The basic and consistent argument of Job's friends against him was that though he *appeared* to be righteous, he really must be *covering* some serious sin that made sense of the calamity that came against him. Therefore, Job insisted that he was *not* covering his sins **as Adam**, who blamed Eve and vainly tried to cover his sin.

i. "Job has never dissembled, attempting to conceal his sin 'like Adam.'" (Andersen)

e. **Because I feared the great multitude:** Here, Job answered the accusation that he was motivated to hide his sin because of the fear of how it would appear before the public. Job's friends had probably known many seemingly righteous people who had hidden their sins and were destroyed when they were eventually exposed, and they assumed Job was like them. Job here rightly protested that he was *not* like such men who hide their sin out of fear of public humiliation and **contempt.**

B. Job concludes his plea.

1. (35-37) *Job demands an audience with God.*

Oh, that I had one to hear me!
Here is my mark.
Oh, that the Almighty would answer me,
That my Prosecutor had written a book!
Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
And bind it on me *like* a crown;
I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him."

a. **Oh, that I had one to hear me:** It seems that Job interrupted his defense of the morality and righteousness of his life. He probably had much more he could say to defend himself, but broke off that line of reasoning and made a final, dramatic appeal to be heard before the throne of God.

i. "Job strategically brought his oration to its climax with a sudden change in tone... He was now sure of his innocence, so confident of the truthfulness of these oaths that he affixed his signature and presented them as his defense with a challenge to God for a corresponding written indictment." (Smick)

ii. The *finality* of his words are demonstrated by the phrase, "**Here is my mark.**" "Job's statement means literally, 'Here is my *taw*.' Some versions translate this, 'Here is my signature,' since *taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, could be used like our letter 'X' to denote a person's 'mark' or 'signature.' Yet even more interesting is the fact that in the ancient Hebrew script used by the author of *Job*, this letter *taw* was a cross-shaped mark. In a sense, therefore, what Job was saying is, 'Here is my cross.'" (Mason)

b. **Oh, that the Almighty would answer me:** Job was absolutely convinced that what he needed was vindication (or at least an **answer**) from God. His friends thoroughly analyzed his situation and came to completely

wrong conclusions. Job couldn't make sense of it himself. Here, he called God out to **answer** for what He had done.

i. This is the demand that Job would later repent of in Job 42:5-6. Job would come to find that he had no right to *demand* an answer from God, and indeed had to be content when God seemed to refuse an answer.

c. **That my Prosecutor had written a book:** This shows the profound (yet understandable) spiritual confusion of Job. *He felt that God was his accuser (my Prosecutor), when really it was Satan.* We sympathize with Job, knowing that he could not see behind that mysterious curtain that separated earth from heaven; yet we learn from what Job should have known.

i. "There is the consummate irony of Job's daring his 'accuser' (whom he believes to be God) to put something in writing... Of course all along the reader knows that Job's real accuser is not God but Satan. But Job does not know this." (Mason)

d. **Surely I would carry it on my shoulder:** Here Job, stepping over bound he would later repent of, longed to have the accusation of God against him written out so he could refute it as he had so effectively refuted his friends. He was so confident in what he knew of himself that he said he would **approach** God **like a prince**.

i. Job was indeed confident in what he did know; that he was a blameless and upright man who did not bring the catastrophe upon himself by his own special sin. What he was *much too* confident about were the things *he could not see*; the things that happened in the spiritual realm, known to the reader of Job 1-2, but unknown to Job in the story. Somewhat like his friends, Job thought he had it all figured out, but he didn't.

ii. *"Upon my shoulder; as a trophy or badge of honour. I should not fear nor smother it, but glory in it, and make open show of it, as that which gave me the happy and long-desired occasion of vindicating myself."* (Poole)

iii. **I would declare to Him the number of my steps:** "Far from being abashed, Job is belligerent to the last, eager to have his case settled, confident of the outcome. He is capable of giving a full *account* of all his steps." (Andersen)

2. (38-40) *The conclusion of Job's words.*

**"If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
If I have eaten its fruit without money,
Or caused its owners to lose their lives;
Then let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And weeds instead of barley."
The words of Job are ended.**

a. **If my land cries out against me:** In this chapter Job testified to his own integrity in the most solemn of terms, calling repeated curses upon himself if his friends could indeed demonstrate that he was a conspicuous sinner worthy of conspicuous judgment or discipline from God. Now, he called one more witness on his behalf: his own land and property.

i. This was not unusual in the ancient thinking. "The land is personified as the chief witness of the crimes committed on it... Job is prepared to accept the primaeval curses on Adam (Gen 3:17) and Cain (Gen 4:11)."

 (Andersen)

b. **The words of Job are ended:** It isn't that there are no more words from Job in this Book of Job; he will speak again briefly in later chapters. Yet Job is definitely

done *arguing his case*. He is finished; one more man will try in vain to fix the problem; and then God will appear. We might rightly say that God – silent to this point – could not (or would not) appear and speak until *all* the arguments of man were exhausted.

i. "This is not a mere epigraph of a writer, or editor. They are the concluding words which Job uttered: by which he informed his friends that he did not intend to carry the controversy any further; but that he had now said all he meant to say. So far as he was concerned, the controversy was ended." (Bullinger)

ii. "At this point, then, we have reached the end of Job's expressions of pain. The end is silence. That is God's opportunity for speech. He often waits until we have said everything: and then, in the silence prepared for such speech, He answers." (Morgan)

Elihu Rebukes Job's Three Friends

Job 32:1 Because Job was convinced of his own innocence, the three men gave up trying to answer him.

Job 32:2 But a bystander named Elihu could not control his anger any longer, because Job was justifying himself and blaming God. (Elihu was the son of Barakel, a descendant of Buz, and belonged to the clan of Ram.)

Job 32:3 He was also angry with Job's three friends. They could not find any way to answer Job, and this made it appear that God was in the wrong.

Job 32:4 Because Elihu was the youngest one there, he had waited until everyone finished speaking.

Job 32:5 When he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he was angry

Job 32:6 and began to speak. I am young, and you are old, so I was afraid to tell you what I think.

Job 32:7 I told myself that you ought to speak, that you older men should share your wisdom.

Job 32:8 But it is the spirit of Almighty God that comes to us and gives us wisdom.

Job 32:9 It is not growing old that makes us wise or helps us to know what is right.

Job 32:10 So now I want you to listen to me; let me tell you what I think.

Job 32:11 I listened patiently while you were speaking and waited while you searched for wise phrases.

Job 32:12 I paid close attention and heard you fail; you have not disproved what Job has said.

Job 32:13 How can you claim you have discovered wisdom? God must answer Job, for you have failed.

Job 32:14 Job was speaking to you, not to me, but I would never answer the way you did.

Job 32:15 Words have failed them, Job; they have no answer for you.

Job 32:16 Shall I go on waiting when they are silent? They stand there with nothing more to say.

Job 32:17 No, I will give my own answer now and tell you what I think.

Job 32:18 I can hardly wait to speak. I can't hold back the words.

Job 32:19 If I don't get a chance to speak, I will burst like a wineskin full of new wine.

Job 32:20 I can't stand it; I have to speak.

Job 32:21 I will not take sides in this debate; I am not going to flatter anyone.

Job 32:22 I don't know how to flatter, and God would quickly punish me if I did.

Job 32:1-22

Job 32 – Hearing from Elihu

A. Why Elihu spoke.

1. (1-5) Elihu and his dissatisfaction with the answers of Job's friends.

So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job. When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

a. **So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes:** At the end of Job's persuasive arguments in Job 28-30, his friends had nothing more to say. They still thought that Job was completely wrong, but they felt he was so confirmed in his own opinions (**he was righteous in his own eyes**) that it was useless to keep the discussion going.

b. **Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram:** This is the first mention of **Elihu** in the Book of Job. Because he appears, dominates all discussion and then abruptly leaves, some modern commentators think that he wasn't really part of the story and was inserted into the account later by the author or another editor.

i. Of all the friends of Job, Elihu is the only one with a genealogy. "The Buzite he is called, either from his progenitor Buz, the son of Nahor, who was the

brother of Abraham, and had by Milchah, Huz, his firstborn (of whom some think Job came), and Buz, his brother, Gen 22:21; or else from his country, the city of Buz, a city of Idumea, Jer 25:23." (Trapp)

ii. The mention of his genealogy is important, because it reminds us that Elihu *was not* a fictional character. "His pedigree is this particularly described, partly for his honour... and principally to evidence the truth of this history, which otherwise might seem to be but a poetical fiction." (Poole)

iii. "Elihu, he is called. The name is Hebrew, and its signification, *My-God-is-He*, is as clearly Hebrew as that of some names of analogous meaning in our own language." (Bradley)

iv. Elihu appears and disappears suddenly; yet he does belong and his speech makes sense here. "It is true Elihu is not mentioned elsewhere in the book; so his speeches could be left out. But at the beginning (Job 32) and at the end (Job 37), they are skillfully woven into the fabric of the book and made to play a legitimate role." (Smick)

v. "But still the question has been asked, *Who was Elihu?* I answer, He was 'the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram:' this is all we know of him. But this Scriptural answer will not satisfy those who are determined to find out mysteries where there are none. Some make him a descendant of Judah; Jerome, Bede, Lyranus, and some of the rabbis, make him Balaam the son of Beor, the magician; Bishop Warburton makes him Ezra the scribe; and Dr. Hodges makes him the second person in the glorious Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, and supposes that the chief scope of this part of the book was to convict Job of self-righteousness, and to show

the necessity of the doctrine of justification by faith! When these points are *proved*, they should be *credited*." (Clarke)

c. Then the wrath of Elihu... was aroused against Job: Apparently, Elihu was a silent listener at the whole dialogue up to this point. He was angry **against Job** because he felt that Job **justified himself rather than God**. Elihu felt that Job was more concerned about being right himself than God being right.

i. We can easily understand how Elihu felt this. Yet what he did not understand was that *both* Job and God were right. The friends had forced themselves and Job into a false dilemma: either Job is right or God is right. They could not see or understand how *both* were right.

ii. "Four times in the Hebrew text we are told that he was angry. First at Job for justifying himself rather than God and then at the friends because of their inability to refute Job." (Smick)

iii. Elihu will speak, but Job will not answer him. "Job never had opportunity to answer him. God took no notice of him except to interrupt him." (Morgan)

d. Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused: Elihu was also angry at Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar because they had failed to solve the controversy (**they had found no answer**), while at the same time they were (in Elihu's opinion) too harsh against Job (**and yet had condemned Job**).

i. "Elihu is angry with everybody. He is the classic angry young man, and from the outset what we need to notice about this kind of anger is that it puts him in a class by himself. The fact that he is angry at both sides of the debate separates him from Job, on the

one hand, but also from the other three friends.”
(Mason)

e. **Because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job:** Out of respect for those **older than he**, Elihu held back for as long as he felt he could. Now, he felt that he simply had to speak.

i. “How *young* he was, or how *old* they were, we cannot tell; but there was no doubt a great disparity in their ages.” (Clarke)

2. (6-9) *Why Elihu overcame his hesitancy to speak.*

So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

“I *am* young in years, and you *are* very old;

Therefore I was afraid,

And dared not declare my opinion to you.

I said, ‘Age should speak,

And multitude of years should teach wisdom.’

But *there is* a spirit in man,

And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Great men are not *always* wise,

Nor do the aged *always* understand justice.”

a. **I am young in years, and you are very old:** Elihu came as a young man among older men, and because of this was willing to hold his words for a long time.

b. **But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding:** Elihu believed that just because Job and his three friends were older, it did not mean that they were the only ones with **a spirit in a man**, and the only one who had received **understanding** from the **Almighty**.

i. **There is a spirit in a man:** “So the sense of the place is, Every man, as a man, whether old or young,

hath a reasonable soul, by which he is able in some measure to discern between good and evil, and to judge of men's opinions and discourses; and therefore I also may venture to deliver my opinion." (Poole)

ii. "We have been trying to know God by the intellect, by reading the Bible intellectually, by endeavouring to apprehend human systems. There is, however, a deeper and truer method. 'There is a spirit in man!' Open your spirit to the divine Spirit as you open a window to the sunny air." (Meyer)

c. Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice: We can only imagine the reaction from Job and his three friends at these words of Elihu. They were probably united together for the first time in a long time; they might not agree with each other, but they certainly all would disagree that this young upstart could be wiser or have more understanding than they did.

i. Elihu believed that the older men – for all of their supposed wisdom – didn't understand the matter at all; he thought that the old men were wrong and that the young men (in particular, himself) were right. The thinker and writer G.K. Chesterson wrote this about men like Elihu: "I believe what really happens in history is this: the old man is always wrong; and the young people are always wrong about what is wrong with him. The practical form it takes is this: that, while the old man may stand by some stupid custom, the young man always attacks it with some theory that turns out to be equally stupid."

ii. Nevertheless, we can say that in principle Elihu was correct. "Age is no just measure of wisdom. There are beardless sages and greyheaded children." (Trapp)

iii. Elihu shows some of the strengths and weaknesses of his youth. "Despite his anger (Job 32:2-3) and wordy lecturing style, Elihu never got bitter as did Bildad and Zophar." (Smick)

B. Elihu introduces his speech.

1. (10-14) *Elihu criticizes Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as ineffective.*

**"Therefore I say, 'Listen to me,
I also will declare my opinion.'
Indeed I waited for your words,
I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out
what to say.
I paid close attention to you;
And surely not one of you convinced Job,
Or answered his words;
Lest you say, 'We have found wisdom';
God will vanquish him, not man.
Now he has not directed *his* words against me;
So I will not answer him with your words."**

a. **Therefore I say, "Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion"**: From this *request* for the attention and ear of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, we can assume that there were sour and disdainful faces on the older men. Yet Elihu pressed forward, asking for this audience.

b. **Surely not one of you convinced Job, or answered his words**: Elihu was frustrated because Job's friends didn't put him in his place the way he thought they should. We can imagine Elihu following the debate, thinking of what *he* would say in response to Job, and being frustrated that the answers of Job's friends were not as brilliant as the answers in Elihu's mind.

2. (15-22) *Elihu's inner compulsion to speak.*

**“They are dismayed and answer no more;
Words escape them.
And I have waited, because they did not speak,
Because they stood still *and* answered no more.
I also will answer my part,
I too will declare my opinion.
For I am full of words;
The spirit within me compels me.
Indeed my belly *is* like wine *that* has no vent;
It is ready to burst like new wineskins.
I will speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.
Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone;
Nor let me flatter any man.
For I do not know how to flatter,
*Else my Maker would soon take me away.”***

a. **They are dismayed and answer no more; words escape them:** Elihu noted that Job’s friends were exhausted by the debate. In the mind of Elihu, it was fortunate that he had so much energy and so many words, because now he could start where the three friends had left off.

b. **For I am full of words; the spirit within me compels me:** Elihu certainly was **full of words**; for this and the next five chapters he will drone on and on, unable to shut up and unable to let anyone else speak. It is by far the longest single speech in the Book of Job, longer than even God’s speech in later chapters.

i. We notice already that Elihu has spent a chapter simply *introducing* his speech. He hasn’t even gotten to the real points he wants to make. Such long introductions and wordy methods are characteristic of Elihu, and he was not the last man on this earth to use too many words.

ii. "Almost all modern interpreters have found Elihu to be insufferably wordy. MacKenzie says that it takes him twenty-four verses to say, 'Look out! I'm going to speak!'" (Smick)

c. **Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; nor let me flatter any man. For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away:** Elihu was determined to flatter no man, *except himself*. In this obviously self-flattering introduction to the speech, Elihu has clearly presented himself as smarter, wiser, and having more understanding than any of the four other men with him. Elihu seemed painfully unaware of how he sounded and looked.

Elihu Rebukes Job

Job 33:1 And now, Job, listen carefully to all that I have to say.

Job 33:2 I am ready to say what's on my mind.

Job 33:3 All my words are sincere, and I am speaking the truth.

Job 33:4 God's spirit made me and gave me life.

Job 33:5 Answer me if you can. Prepare your arguments.

Job 33:6 You and I are the same in God's sight, both of us were formed from clay.

Job 33:7 So you have no reason to fear me; I will not overpower you.

Job 33:8 Now this is what I heard you say:

Job 33:9 "I am not guilty; I have done nothing wrong. I am innocent and free from sin.

Job 33:10 But God finds excuses for attacking me and treats me like an enemy.

Job 33:11 He binds chains on my feet; he watches every move I make."

Job 33:12 But I tell you, Job, you are wrong. God is greater than any human being.

Job 33:13 Why do you accuse God of never answering our complaints?

Job 33:14 Although God speaks again and again, no one pays attention to what he says.

Job 33:15 At night when people are asleep, God speaks in dreams and visions.

Job 33:16 He makes them listen to what he says, and they are frightened at his warnings.

Job 33:17 God speaks to make them stop their sinning and to save them from becoming proud.

Job 33:18 He will not let them be destroyed; he saves them from death itself.

Job 33:19 God corrects us by sending sickness and filling our bodies with pain.

Job 33:20 Those who are sick lose their appetites, and even the finest food looks revolting.

Job 33:21 Their bodies waste away to nothing; you can see all their bones;

Job 33:22 they are about to go to the world of the dead.

Job 33:23 Perhaps an angel may come to their aid—one of God's thousands of angels, who remind us of our duty.

Job 33:24 In mercy the angel will say, "Release them! They are not to go down to the world of the dead. Here is the ransom to set them free."

Job 33:25 Their bodies will grow young and strong again;

Job 33:26 when they pray, God will answer; they will worship God with joy; God will set things right for them again.

Job 33:27 Each one will say in public, "I have sinned. I have not done right, but God spared me."

Job 33:28 He kept me from going to the world of the dead,
and I am still alive."

Job 33:29 God does all this again and again;

Job 33:30 each one saves a person's life, and gives him the joy of living.

Job 33:31 Now, Job, listen to what I am saying; be quiet and let me speak.

Job 33:32 But if you have something to say, let me hear it; I would gladly admit you are in the right.

Job 33:33 But if not, be quiet and listen to me, and I will teach you how to be wise.

Job 33:1-33

Job 33 – Elihu Teaches Job

A. Elihu challenges Job's defense.

1. (1-7) *Elihu to Job: "I am your spokesman before God."*

**"But please, Job, hear my speech,
And listen to all my words.
Now, I open my mouth;
My tongue speaks in my mouth.
My words *come* from my upright heart;
My lips utter pure knowledge.
The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
If you can answer me,
Set *your words* in order before me;
Take your stand.
Truly I *am* as your spokesman before God;
I also have been formed out of clay.
Surely no fear of me will terrify you,
Nor will my hand be heavy on you."**

a. **But please, Job, hear my speech, and listen to all my words:** Elihu again demonstrated his gift for speaking without saying much. These first seven verses of the chapter are mainly a wordy, windy introduction.

i. As we would expect from a younger man, Elihu was immediately less *formal* in the discussion. "Elihu spoke directly to Job, appealing to him by name... The counselors studiously avoided even mentioning Job's name, which indicates how formal their relationship was." (Smick)

b. The Spirit of God has made me... Truly I am as your spokesman before God: We see here also the touches of pride that marked Elihu and many young men since him. He was anxious to demonstrate to Job and to the three friends of Job that he was just as good, just as spiritual, and just as wise as they were.

i. Indeed, we can say that Elihu thought of himself as *just a little* better, spiritual, and wise than Job and his three friends. He believed that he could be an effective **spokesman** for Job **before God**, even as Job had cried out for before (Job 9:32-33).

ii. "It is obvious that Elihu does have some glaring faults: he talks too much; he repeats himself; he is enormously conceited. Worst of all, like the other friends, he seriously misreads Job's problem as being one of unrepented sin, and as a result he condemns a righteous man." (Mason)

iii. In all this, Elihu is an interesting specimen. He has good points and bad points; he obviously is proud and wordy; yet he sometimes speaks with prophetic power and clarity. "Now he joins in with a combination of deference and cocksureness that captures the pose of youth that sees a little, but sees it clearly." (Andersen)

c. Surely no fear of me will terrify you, nor will my hand be heavy on you: Elihu wanted to assure Job that he had nothing to fear from his offer to be Job's **spokesman before God**.

i. "Despite all the good that might be said of Elihu, the fact remains that he really is an astonishingly pompous little windbag. He takes the entire first chapter, for example, plus portions of the second, simply to clear his throat and announce that he has something to say." (Mason)

2. (8-11) Elihu says of Job: "You think you are without sin."

**"Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your* words, saying,
'I *am* pure, without transgression;
I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity in me.
Yet He finds occasions against me,
He counts me as His enemy;
He puts my feet in the stocks,
He watches all my paths.'"**

a. **Surely you have spoken in my hearing... "I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent, and there is no iniquity in me"**: Elihu claimed to have listened to Job carefully, and now reported what he says he heard. He said that Job claimed to be **pure**, to be **without transgression**, to be **innocent**, and sinless (**there is no iniquity in me**).

i. This means that young Elihu had *not* heard Job carefully. Though Job did strongly (and rightly) argue that he was a generally godly man who was blameless and upright, he *did not* claim to be sinless or **without transgression**. Job certainly knew that he was a sinner in a general sense and could not be considered righteous compared to God.

- *Therefore my words have been rash (Job 6:3).*
- *Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? (Job 7:21).*

- *How can a man be righteous before God? (Job 9:2).*
- *I know that You will not hold me innocent (Job 9:28).*
- *For You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth (Job 13:26).*
- *Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse (Job 19:20).*

ii. "We need to ask, therefore, whether Elihu is fair. To some extent, he is. Job has repeatedly claimed to be *clean* and *pure*, whatever the words he used... But, side by side with this, Job has often admitted to being a sinner." (Andersen)

iii. Therefore, despite Elihu's claims to the contrary, he did not accurately hear Job. He perhaps **heard the sound of his words**, but he did not listen carefully to the meaning and context of Job.

iv. "But had Elihu ever heard Job saying thus? Or did he not rather misinterpret his words?... But good Job had no such conceit of himself, as may appear by many passages of his." (Trapp)

v. He also did not understand *why* Job protested his general innocence. "In reality Job's defense of his righteousness *is* a defense of God. It is a defense of God's faithfulness, and in the end this is the only leg a believer has to stand on." (Mason)

b. **Yet He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy:** Here, Elihu was more faithful in explaining the mind of Job. Job *did* sometimes feel that God regarded him as an **enemy**, and had in a sense imprisoned Job.

i. Yet Elihu misunderstood this feeling of Job's, because he put it in the context of Job's claim to sinless perfection. When Elihu put the true claim of Job's sense that God was his enemy next to the false claim that Job said he was sinless, it made the claim that God was his enemy seem much more wrong and even ridiculous.

B. Elihu insists that God has indeed answered Job.

1. (12-18) *Elihu to Job: "Perhaps God spoke to you in a dream."*

"Look, *in* this you are not righteous.

I will answer you,

For God is greater than man.

Why do you contend with Him?

For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.

For God may speak in one way, or in another,

***Yet man* does not perceive it.**

In a dream, in a vision of the night,

When deep sleep falls upon men,

While slumbering on their beds,

Then He opens the ears of men,

And seals their instruction.

In order to turn man *from his* deed,

And conceal pride from man,

He keeps back his soul from the Pit,

And his life from perishing by the sword."

a. **I will answer you, for God is greater than man:**

Young Elihu again spoke in his wordy, imprecise way. It certainly was true that **God is greater than man**, but that did not mean that Elihu could or should **answer** Job (especially in the way that he did). Yet Elihu made a strong connection between the two in his own mind.

i. "His reason for this conclusion is the first big disappointment in his speech. The truth that *God is greater than man* (Job 33:12 b) is so obvious as to be banal. No-one denies this." (Andersen)

b. **Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words:** Here Elihu spoke the truth. Like many young men, he was somewhat proud and too confident in his own wisdom and analysis; yet at the same time, he was certainly correct on some points. He was correct in telling Job that God did not owe him (or anyone else) an explanation for what He does, and that Job was wrong to demand such.

c. **For God may speak in one way, or in another:** Elihu's thought here is that perhaps God *had spoken* to Job already, but Job did **not perceive it**. It could have been through **a dream** or through **a vision of the night** that God warned Job to repent (**He keeps back his soul from the Pit**), but Job wasn't paying attention.

i. God may still speak in a dream today: "To decry *all* such, because there are many *vain dreams*, would be nearly as much wisdom as to deny the Bible, because there are many foolish books." (Clarke)

ii. Adam Clarke saw a distinction between **a dream** and **a vision of the night**: "*Visions or images presented in the imagination during slumber, when men are betwixt sleeping and waking, or when, awake and in bed, they are wrapt up in deep contemplation, the darkness of the night having shut out all objects from their sight, so that the mind is not diverted by images of earthly things impressed on the senses.*"

2. (19-28) *Elihu to Job: "God spoke to you in your sufferings, to save your soul from death."*

**"Man is also chastened with pain on his bed,
And with strong *pain* in many of his bones,
So that his life abhors bread,
And his soul succulent food.
His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones stick out *which once* were not seen.
Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,
And his life to the executioners."**

**"If there is a messenger for him,
A mediator, one among a thousand,
To show man His uprightness,
Then He is gracious to him, and says,
'Deliver him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom';
His flesh shall be young like a child's,
He shall return to the days of his youth.
He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him,
He shall see His face with joy,
For He restores to man His righteousness.
Then he looks at men and says,
'I have sinned, and perverted *what was* right,
And it did not profit me.'
He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit,
And his life shall see the light."**

a. **Man is also chastened with pain on his bed:** Elihu had just suggested that God spoke to Job in a dream; now he suggests that perhaps God spoke to him through his physical suffering.

i. "The chastisement of sickness and the flagellation of pain whip the sinner back to him who alone can save him. These are the black dogs of the Great Shepherd wherewith he brings back wandering sheep till they come again under his crook, and he leads them into green pastures." (Spurgeon)

ii. "Here the main contention of his argument took shape. It is that through suffering God is dealing with men to some higher issue. According to this argument, suffering is educational." (Morgan)

iii. "More than any of the other friends, Elihu develops the idea of suffering as a form of spiritual discipline or chastening. While the other friends do touch on this theme, there is a subtle difference in the way Elihu approaches it. Where the others view suffering as punishment for sinners, Elihu sees it as the Lord's way of correcting and healing the lives of those He is already committed to saving." (Mason)

b. If there is a messenger for him: Again, Elihu (in is overly wordy way) told Job that God *did* send **a messenger** of some sort; Job's problem was that he did not receive it.

i. On **mediator** in Job 33:23 : "Or *interpreter: i.e.,* one who can interpret and reveal the truth concerning God and His ways." (Bullinger)

ii. "Jesus Christ is indeed a blessed interpreter. An interpreter must understand two languages. Our Lord Jesus understands the language of God. Whatever are the great truths of divine intelligence and infinite wisdom, too high and mysterious for us to comprehend or even to discern, Christ fully understands them all... Moreover, Jesus understands our language, for he is a man like ourselves, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and smarting under our sicknesses. He can read whatever is in the heart of man, and so he can tell to God the language of man, and speak to man in the language of man what God would say to him." (Spurgeon)

c. Then He is gracious to him: In the view of Elihu, if Job would only receive and respond to God's

messenger, if he would only admit to God's **uprightness**, then he would be restored to God's favor.

- He would receive God's grace (**He is gracious to him**).
- He would be rescued from destruction (**Deliver him from going down to the Pit**).
- He would be healed (**His flesh shall be young like a child's**).
- He would see his relationship with God restored (**He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, He shall see His face with joy**).
- He will repent before men (**He looks at men and says, "I have sinned"**).

i. In this we see that Elihu's argument is really just the argument of the three friends of Job, merely restated and delivered with new energy. The message is: "Job, the problem is that you are a sinner and are blaming God. If you would give glory to God and repent, everything would get better."

ii. "It must be admitted that the actual substance of Elihu's arguments is very little different from that of Job's other friends... essentially Elihu does not say anything we have not heard before." (Mason)

iii. Young Elihu *thought* that he knew more or could explain better than Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but he really could not. "Elihu has already joined the friends in his estimate of Job as self-righteous. No-one can yet see a solution in which both Job and God are shown to be in the right." (Andersen)

iv. Adam Clarke saw in this section six ways that God speaks to mankind:

- Dreams (Job 33:15).

- Night Visions (Job 33:15).
- Secret Inspirations (Job 33:16).
- Afflictions (Job 33:19).
- Messengers (Job 33:23).
- Through a Ransom/Atonement (Job 33:24).

d. **He shall pray to God:** Job 33:26-28 is a wonderful description of a genuine conversion experience. It shows someone who has genuinely turned to God and has a real, joyful fellowship with God. Elihu told Job that all this could be his again, if he would only start listening to God.

i. Though this section could not rightly be applied to Job and his situation, it is still a powerful and beautiful description of how God speaks to man, and what God does in the life of the converted man or woman.

ii. Elihu could see and describe:

- Man condemned and being drawn down to **the Pit** (Job 33:22).
- Man's need for a **messenger** (Job 33:23).
- Man's need for a **mediator** (Job 33:23).
- Man's need to see God's justice and **uprightness** (Job 33:23).
- God being **gracious** to man (Job 33:24).
- God calling for man to be delivered from **the Pit** (Job 33:24).
- God finding **a ransom** for man (Job 33:24).
- God restoring man to **youth**, as if born again (Job 33:25).
- Man's heart to **pray to God** once converted (Job 33:26).

- God's **delight** in converted man (Job 33:26).
- Man's confession and public repentance (Job 33:27).
- Man once redeemed, now seeing and living in **the light** (Job 33:28).

iii. "Observe that the text says, 'I have found a ransom.' This ransom is an invention of divine wisdom. I do not think it would ever have occurred to any mind but the mind of God himself to save sinners by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. The most astonishing novelty under heaven is the old, old story of the cross of Christ." (Spurgeon)

iv. "God, looking on a sinner slipping down to hell, says, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.' Almighty love seems to sing out with all her might; and rocks, hills, and valleys suffice not to repeat the echo of the strain, 'I have found, I have found, I have found a ransom.' This is God's 'Eureka!'" (Spurgeon)

v. "Elihu also exhibits an astonishing gift for prophecy, and this is one reason why we cannot dismiss him quite so easily as we can Job's other friends. Elihu has his ridiculous side, but he also reaches for and touches the sublime." (Mason)

3. (29-33) *Elihu pleads with Job to listen to him.*

**"Behold, God works all these *things*,
Twice, *in fact*, three *times* with a man,
To bring back his soul from the Pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life."**

**"Give ear, Job, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will speak.
If you have anything to say, answer me;
Speak, for I desire to justify you."**

**If not, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."**

a. **Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man:** Elihu wanted Job to understand that God was in fact being very patient with Job. Job felt that God was being harsh and treating him like an enemy; Elihu wanted Job to appreciate what he understood to be God's longsuffering towards Job.

b. **Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom:** Perhaps Job stirred to respond to young Elihu; perhaps the older suffering Job simply rolled his eyes at the younger man. Whatever Job's reaction, Elihu felt the need to tell Job to "**Hold your peace,**" and felt he had to assure Job that he would **teach** him **wisdom** – as if Job couldn't judge for himself whether Elihu's words were wise.

i. "It seems Elihu had repentance in mind as he called on Job 'to speak up' or else listen and learn wisdom." (Smick) Since Job wasn't interested in repenting the way Elihu and his friends thought he should, Elihu would continue.

Elihu Asserts God's Justice

Job 34:1 (1-2) You men are so wise, so clever; listen now to what I am saying.

Job 34:3 You know good food when you taste it, but not wise words when you hear them.

Job 34:4 It is up to us to decide the case.

Job 34:5 Job claims that he is innocent, that God refuses to give him justice.

Job 34:6 He asks, "How could I lie and say I am wrong? I am fatally wounded, but I am sinless."

Job 34:7 Have you ever seen anyone like this man Job? He never shows respect for God.

Job 34:8 He likes the company of evil people and goes around with sinners.

Job 34:9 He says that it never does any good to try to follow God's will.

Job 34:10 Listen to me, you men who understand! Will Almighty God do what is wrong?

Job 34:11 He rewards people for what they do and treats them as they deserve.

Job 34:12 Almighty God does not do evil; he is never unjust to anyone.

Job 34:13 Did God get his power from someone else? Did someone put him in charge of the world?

Job 34:14 If God took back the breath of life,

Job 34:15 then everyone living would die and turn into dust again.

Job 34:16 Now listen to me, if you are wise.

Job 34:17 Are you condemning the righteous God? Do you think that *he* hates justice?

Job 34:18 God condemns kings and rulers when they are worthless or wicked.

Job 34:19 He does not take the side of rulers nor favor the rich over the poor, for he created everyone.

Job 34:20 We may suddenly die at night. God strikes us down and we perish; he kills the mighty with no effort at all.

Job 34:21 He watches every step we take.

Job 34:22 There is no darkness dark enough to hide a sinner from God.

Job 34:23 God does not need to set a time for us to go and be judged by him.

Job 34:24 He does not need an investigation to remove leaders and replace them with others.

Job 34:25 Because he knows what they do; he overthrows them and crushes them by night.

Job 34:26 He punishes sinners where all can see it,

Job 34:27 because they have stopped following him and ignored all his commands.

Job 34:28 They forced the poor to cry out to God, and he heard their calls for help.

Job 34:29 If God decided to do nothing at all, no one could criticize him. If he hid his face, we would be helpless.

Job 34:30 There would be nothing that nations could do to keep godless oppressors from ruling them.

Job 34:31 Job, have you confessed your sins to God and promised not to sin again?

Job 34:32 Have you asked God to show you your faults, and have you agreed to stop doing evil?

Job 34:33 Since you object to what God does, can you expect him to do what you want? The decision is yours, not mine; tell us now what you think.

Job 34:34 Any sensible person will surely agree; and the wise who hear me will say

Job 34:35 that Job is speaking from ignorance and that nothing he says makes sense.

Job 34:36 Think through everything that Job says; you will see that he talks like an evil man.

Job 34:37 To his sins he adds rebellion; in front of us all he mocks God.

Job 34:1-37

Job 34 – Elihu Denounces Job

A. Elihu denounces Job for losing faith and denying God's justice.

1. (1-9) He again inaccurately summarizes Job's argument.

**Elihu further answered and said:
“Hear my words, you wise *men*;
Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.
For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
Let us choose justice for ourselves;
Let us know among ourselves what *is* good.”**

**“For Job has said, ‘I am righteous,
But God has taken away my justice;
Should I lie concerning my right?
My wound *is* incurable, *though I am* without
transgression.’
What man *is* like Job,
Who drinks scorn like water,
Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing
That he should delight in God.’”**

a. **Hear my words, you wise men:** Here, Elihu again gave a wordy introduction to his point. In this speech he would quote the words of Job, the ones he felt accused God and justified himself.

i. “Of course, neither of these quotations was direct. They rather summarize the conclusions which Job’s arguments seemed to warrant.” (Morgan)

b. **My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression:** This was another slight mischaracterization of what Job said. Job certainly did claim to be wounded so severely by his trials that it might seem ***incurable***; yet again he never claimed to be sinless. He only claimed that there was not some special sin that made him the target of this special catastrophe.

i. Elihu tried to quote specific statements of Job to rebuke, but he quoted selectively and unfairly. “Elihu

picked out only those words of Job that he needed in order to prove his point.” (Smick)

ii. “True it is, that Job in his heat had let fall very many lavish and inconsiderate speeches, as is to be seen almost throughout the tenth chapter; but yet it was far from him ever to say either that himself was without sin or that God was unjust, as Elihu would bear him down.” (Trapp)

iii. **Should I like concerning my right:** “Should I falsely accuse myself of such sins of which I am in no way conscious to myself? Should I betray mine own cause, and deny my integrity, and say that I deserved worse than I have done?” (Poole)

c. **What man is like Job... who goes in company with the workers of iniquity:** It seems unthinkable that Elihu believed that Job actually was a companion of **wicked men**. Perhaps he meant that what he considered to be Job’s confused moral thinking led him to associate with the morally corrupt.

i. “In language even stronger than that of his elders, the youthful speaker attacks Job, not for some concealed guilt in his past life – of this, unlike his three elders, the youthful speaker says nothing – but as uttering blasphemy with delight, as *drinking up scorning*, as one athirst beneath an Eastern sun drinks *water*, and by so doing throwing himself on the side of the wicked.” (Bradley)

d. **For he has said, “It profits a man nothing that he should delight in God”:** Job certainly said nothing like this. We can understand how Elihu *thought* this about Job, because Job claimed to **delight in God** and he now seemed to claim that it profited him **nothing**. But Elihu is taking general trains of thought of Job, and extending them further than Job did.

i. "Job had wailed 'that those who provoke God are secure' (Job 12:6) while one who is 'righteous and blameless' is made 'a laughingstock' (Job 12:4; cf. Job 10:3; Job 21:7-8; Job 24:1-12). To Elihu this could mean nothing else than an accusation that God does wrong and it is unthinkable that God would do wrong." (Smick)

ii. "What most alarmed Elihu about Job was that somehow this man had the cheek to blame God for his problems, and yet still to consider himself righteous and faithful." (Mason)

2. (10-15) *The righteousness of God and His moral order.*

"Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding:

Far be it from God *to do* wickedness,

And *from* the Almighty to *commit* iniquity.

For He repays man *according to* his work,

And makes man to find a reward according to *his* way.

Surely God will never do wickedly,

Nor will the Almighty pervert justice.

Who gave Him charge over the earth?

Or who appointed *Him* over the whole world?

If He should set His heart on it,

***If* He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,**

All flesh would perish together,

And man would return to dust."

a. **For he repays man according to his work:** Elihu followed the simple "you always reap what you sow" equation earlier promoted by Eliphaz in the very first speech of Job's friends (Job 4:7-11).

i. Many people today believe the idea of Elihu (and Eliphaz) and believe it as an absolute spiritual law instead of a general principle. Some take the passage

from Gal 6:7 : *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.* Yet it is important to understand the *context* of Paul's statement, which was encouragement and exhortation for Christians to give materially for the support of their ministers. It is true that the principle of Gal 6:7 has application beyond giving and supporting teachers and ministers. It has a general application in life; what we get out is often what we put in. Yet Paul did not promote some law of spiritual karma that ensures we will receive good when we do good things or always receive bad when we do bad things. If there were such an absolute spiritual law, it would surely damn us all. Instead, Paul simply related the principle of sowing and reaping to the way we manage our resources before the Lord. He used the same picture in 1Co 9:11 and 2Co 9:6-10.

b. Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice: Elihu was correct, and this was an idea agreed upon by Job and his three friends. Yet the problem was that Elihu and Job and his three friends also seemed to assume that God would never do mysteriously and were too confident in their ability to understand God and His ways.

i. "Elihu is now caught in the same logic as the friends. By affirming that God's ways cannot be questioned, he is forced to denounce Job's opinions as impious." (Andersen)

c. If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust: Here, Elihu wanted to emphasize the idea of God's independence and transcendence. He wanted Job to remember that God was so mighty that Job was entirely wrong to question Him at all.

3. (16-20) *God preserves His moral order.*

**"If *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words:
Should one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn *Him who is* most just?
Is it fitting to say to a king, 'You are worthless,'
And to nobles, 'You are wicked'?
Yet He is not partial to princes,
Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor;
For they *are* all the work of His hands.
In a moment they die, in the middle of the night;
The people are shaken and pass away;
The mighty are taken away without a hand."**

a. **Will you condemn Him who is just:** Elihu took Job's agonized cries to God as Job *condemning* God. It was an unfair assumption; Job's agony was deeply rooted in the sense that he *did* love God and respected His justice.

b. **Yet He is not partial to princes, nor does He regard the rich more than the poor:** Elihu, in his own wordy way, was again emphasizing the perfect justice of God.

4. (21-30) *The perfection of God's judgments.*

**"For His eyes *are* on the ways of man,
And He sees all his steps.
There is no darkness nor shadow of death
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
For He need not further consider a man,
That he should go before God in judgment.
He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,
And sets others in their place.
Therefore he knows their works;
He overthrows *them* in the night,
And they are crushed.**

**He strikes them as wicked *men*
In the open sight of others,
Because they turned back from Him,
And would not consider any of His ways,
So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to
Him;
For He hears the cry of the afflicted.
When He gives quietness, who then can make
trouble?
And when He hides *His* face, who then can see Him,
Whether *it is* against a nation or a man alone?;
That the hypocrite should not reign,
Lest the people be ensnared."**

a. **His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps:** Elihu continued on the theme of God's perfect justice. Here, he emphasized the idea that nothing man does is hidden from the **eyes** of God.

i. "How true it all is, and how important, that we should lay it all to heart! But how completely it failed to explain the problem of Job's sufferings. Once more we have to say that it was all true, even about Job, but it was not all the truth." (Morgan)

b. **He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from Him, and would not consider any of His ways:** Elihu meant this as a warning for Job. God's judgment was so perfect that He judged the kings and princes of this world without partiality. Therefore, if Job did not repent of the sin that prompted his crisis and his sinful response to it, he could be certain God would judge him as one who **turned back from Him**.

i. Adam Clarke had an interesting story to tell on the observation of Elihu that God would avenge the **cry of the poor to come to Him** when the rich and

influential oppressed them: "In times of little liberality, when some men thought they did God service by persecuting those who did not exactly receive *their creed*, nor worship God in *their way*, a certain great man in Scotland grievously persecuted his tenants, because they had religious meetings in private houses out of the order of the establishment; though he never molested them when they spent their time and their money in the alehouse. A holy, simple woman, one of those people, went one morning to the house of the great persecutor, and desired to speak with him. The servant desired to know her message, and he would deliver it, for she could not be admitted. She told him she could deliver her message to none but his master; said it was a matter of great importance, and concerned himself intimately, and alone. The servant having delivered this message, and stated that the woman appeared to have something particular on her mind, his worship condescended to see her. 'What is your business with

me?' said he, in a haughty, overbearing tone. To which she answered, 'Sir, we are a hantle o' puir folk at---, who are strivin' to sairve God accordin' to our ain conscience, and to get our sauls sav'd: yee persecute us; and I am come to beg yee to let us alane; and in ye dinna, we'll pray yee dead.' This rhetoric was irresistible, His lordship did not know what influence such people might have in heaven; he did not like to put such prayers to the proof; wisely took the old woman's advice, and *e'en let them alane*. He was safe; they were satisfied; and God had the glory. When the poor refer their cause to God, he is a terrible avenger. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth, but we to the man that contendeth with his Maker."

c. **That the hypocrite should not reign, lest the people be ensnared:** Elihu thought it was important to emphasize these points, because without them, the moral order of society would be overturned. If these things were shaken, then the **hypocrite** would **reign**, and the common **people** would **be ensnared**.

i. The message of Elihu to Job was clear: *God always does right*. Yet the way he developed and applied that thought to Job's situation was wrong and even dangerous. "If everything God does is right, by definition, and if, because He is Sovereign, God does everything that happens, it follows that everything that happens is right, and the category of evil disappears." (Andersen)

B. Elihu's strong advice for Job.

1. (31-33) *Elihu: What Job should have said.*

**"For has *anyone* said to God,
'I have borne *chastening*;
I will offend no more;
Teach me *what* I do not see;
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?
Should He repay *it* according to your *terms*,
Just because you disavow it?
You must choose, and not I;
Therefore speak what you know."**

a. **For has anyone said to God:** Here, Elihu spoke the words of humble repentance that he thought Job *should* have said. Job was the **anyone** that Elihu had in mind.

- He should have taken the **chastening** like a man.
- He should have promised to **offend no more**, therefore admitting his previous guilt.
- He should have humbly submitted, asking God to **teach** him.

i. Elihu saw *none* of this in Job and it offended him and made him angry. He therefore pressed Job to do what he thought was right.

b. **Should He repay it according to your terms:** Elihu criticized what he thought was Job's arrogance. "Should God be just what you think He should be, and do just what you think He should do?"

i. "The question in verse 33 could be meant to startle Job. Must God recompense him for unfair treatment? Obviously not." (Smick)

ii. "Like the others, Elihu is locked in to the inevitable conclusion: Job is to blame. And his guilt is measured by the scale of his sufferings." (Andersen)

c. **You must choose and not I; therefore speak what you know:** Young Elihu tried to persuade Job with ultimatums and pressure that Job's three friends did not use. He pressed his points on Job with great vigor.

i. It is painful to see this young, brash Elihu speak to the godly Job in this manner. Yet we remember that there is little doubt that Elihu had the best of intentions. He really thought he was *helping* Job.

ii. "This he doth by a special instinct for Job's good, and not out of any desire for revenge. So Farellus pronounced a curse upon young Calvin's studies, in case he should refuse to join with him in the Lord's work at Geneva, where a Church had been newly planted; this so thunderstruck him, that he durst not stir therehence to his dying day." (Trapp)

2. (34-37) *Job's multiplied sins invite God's judgment.*

**"Men of understanding say to me,
Wise men who listen to me:
'Job speaks without knowledge,
His words are without wisdom.'**

**Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,
Because *his* answers are *like* those of wicked men!
For he adds rebellion to his sin;
He claps *his hands* among us,
And multiplies his words against God."**

a. **Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without wisdom:** This, according to Elihu, was the common opinion of the **men of understanding** and the **wise men** who looked at Job's situation. They all agreed that he had no real **wisdom** or **knowledge** in his situation.

b. **Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, because his answers are like those of wicked men:** Young Elihu thought that Job *had not suffered enough*. He thought that a little more suffering (**tried to the utmost**) might bring Job to repentance.

i. "This is a very harsh wish: but the whole chapter is in the same spirit; nearly destitute of mildness and compassion. Who could suppose that such arguings could come out of the mouth of the loving Saviour of mankind?" (Clarke)

ii. Elihu said this because he genuinely believed that Job was getting himself deeper and deeper into sin. We know from Job 1, 2 that Job was in fact a blameless and upright man who spoke from the fog and pain of his crisis and in the presence of his friends who misunderstood him. *Elihu* thought that Job's problems *began* with his sin and got worse as he added **rebellion to his sin**, as he scorned the good advice of his friends (**claps his hands among us**) and as he multiplied **his words against God**.

iii. "Verse 37 is pretty blunt in its accusation. Earlier Job's irreverence was attributed to stupidity rather than to wickedness. The former might be cured by

instruction in wisdom. The cure of the latter is more difficult, especially when it is wilful and repeated.” (Andersen)

iv. “He ends the chapter by once more rebuking Job with a stern severity that exceeds even that of his friends.” (Bradley)

Elihu Condemns Job

Job 35:1 (1-2) It is not right, Job, for you to say that you are innocent in God's sight,

Job 35:3 or to ask God, "How does my sin affect you? What have I gained by not sinning?"

Job 35:4 I am going to answer you and your friends too.

Job 35:5 Look at the sky! See how high the clouds are!

Job 35:6 If you sin, that does no harm to God. If you do wrong many times, does that affect him?

Job 35:7 Do you help God by being so righteous? There is nothing God needs from you.

Job 35:8 Others suffer from your sins, and the good you do helps them.

Job 35:9 When people are oppressed, they groan; they cry for someone to save them.

Job 35:10 But they don't turn to God, their Creator, who gives them hope in their darkest hours.

Job 35:11 They don't turn to God, who makes us wise, wiser than any animal or bird.

Job 35:12 They cry for help, but God doesn't answer, for they are proud and evil.

Job 35:13 It is useless for them to cry out; Almighty God does not see or hear them.

Job 35:14 Job, you say you can't see God; but wait patiently—your case is before him.

Job 35:15 You think that God does not punish, that he pays little attention to sin.

Job 35:16 It is useless for you to go on talking; it is clear you don't know what you are saying.

Job 35:1-16

Job 35 – Elihu Accuses Job of Self-Righteousness

A. Elihu confronts what he believes to be Job's self-righteousness.

1. (1-3) *Elihu to Job: "Are you more righteous than God?"*

Moreover Elihu answered and said:

"Do you think this is right?

Do you say,

'My righteousness is more than God's'?

For you say,

'What advantage will it be to You?

What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?'"

a. **Do you think this is right:** Elihu had just badgered Job severely at the end of his previous discourse. He accused him of adding *rebellion to his sin*, of ignoring the wise counsel of his friends (*he claps his hands among us*), and of speaking wrongly against God (*multiplies his words against God*). So to emphasize the point, he jabbed a finger at Job and said, **"Do you think this is right?"**

b. **For you say... What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned:** Elihu accused Job of a cold calculation; of saying that he denied God's moral order and said that there was no point to sinning or not sinning.

i. "Once again Elihu puts words into Job's mouth, and in the process not only misquotes him but grossly misrepresents his position." (Mason)

ii. "Elihu had missed Job's point, that he wanted to be vindicated because he did believe God was just. Of course Job, in his struggle to understand what God was doing, had sent out two signals, one of which Elihu, like the others, had not been able to hear."
(Smick)

2. (4-8) *Elihu to Job: "God is farther above you than you can imagine."*

**"I will answer you,
And your companions with you.
Look to the heavens and see;
And behold the clouds;
They are higher than you.
If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him?
Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?
If you are righteous, what do you give Him?
Or what does He receive from your hand?
Your wickedness affects a man such as you,
And your righteousness a son of man."**

a. **I will answer you, and your companions with you:** Elihu's arguments and ideas were substantially the same as those of Job's friends. Yet *he thought of himself as different*, and thought that he could correct both Job and Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

b. **Look to the heavens and see; and behold the clouds, they are higher than you:** Elihu wanted Job (and his friends) to understand an idea that they had already discussed and agreed upon, the idea that God is greater than man and beyond man.

i. "The Lord showed Abraham the stars, but Elihu shows Job the clouds... Elihu sees the clouds as a wall between Heaven and earth; to him they are a picture

of God's distance from man, of His unreachability and His impassiveness." (Mason)

ii. "The further we can look unto heaven (or into it) the better shall we conceive of that infinite distance that is betwixt God in heaven and men on earth." (Trapp)

c. If you are righteous, what do you give Him: The idea was that God was so far beyond man that there was nothing man could do to God's benefit. Elihu felt that Job had lost his fear and godly appreciation of God.

i. Elihu had, in one sense, trapped himself in his own argument. If God is so beyond man, then what use is it for Job to repent at all? "According to the terms and requirements of Infinite Righteousness God is independent of man, according to the nature of His heart of love, which these men did not perfectly understand, He cannot be independent." (Morgan)

ii. God is indeed God; but Elihu missed how close God comes to man. "The whole of Biblical revelation, centred and consummated in Christ, shows that human sin inflicts wounds upon God, and causes sorrow to the Holy One: and that man, living in righteousness, does give glory to God, and causes joy to His heart." (Morgan)

iii. "If it is true that because God is so great and so high, the innocence or guilt of a petty human being is a matter of profound indifference to his Maker, on the ground that it can bring Him neither gain nor loss, we are landed, we see at once, on a very gloomy shore. We reach a conclusion fatal to all religion." (Bradley)

B. Self-righteous Job should expect no answer from God.

1. (9-12) *God does not answer the proud, even if they are oppressed.*

“Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out;

They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty.

But no one says,

‘Where *is* God my Maker,

Who gives songs in the night,

Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth,

And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?’

There they cry out, but He does not answer,

Because of the pride of evil men.

a. **Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out:** Elihu understood that men cried out to God when they were oppressed or felt afflicted by **the arm of the mighty**.

i. Elihu wanted to explain why God did not answer the afflicted. Job initially raised the issue. “Job had devoted an entire speech to the subject of God’s apparent indifference to his plight (Job 23) and the plight of all who suffer and are oppressed (Job 24).” (Smick)

b. **But no one says, “Where is God my Maker”:** Elihu noted that men seek God in their time of need, but their seeking often isn’t sincere. They don’t recognize God as their **Maker**, they don’t recognize His comforts (**who gives songs in the night**), and the wisdom He gives (**makes us wiser than the birds of heaven**).

i. **Who gives us songs in the night:** “A holy soul has continual communion with God: night and day its happiness is great; and God, from whom it comes, is the continual subject of its songs of praise.” (Clarke)

ii. "Elihu's reason is right in the majority of cases. The great cause of a Christian's distress, the reason of the depths of sorrow into which many believers are plunged, is simply this — that while they are looking about, on the right hand and on the left, to see how they may escape their troubles, they forget to look to the hills whence all real help cometh; they do not say, 'Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?'" (Spurgeon)

iii. **Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth:** "God hath given to men those gifts which he hath denied to beasts, reason and religion, wisdom to know God and themselves, and their obligations to God, and their dependence upon him. And therefore it ill becometh them to lie like brute creatures, roaring and crying out in their miseries, without taking any notice of God in way of prayer or praise; and if they do so, it is no wonder if God takes no notice of them." (Poole)

iv. "*Beasts, birds, fowls, and in many cases pond-fishes, know and seem thankful to the hand that feeds them; while man, made much more noble than they, gifted with the greatest powers, privileged with the most important benefits, considers not the Lord, nor discerns the operation of his hand. Quadrupeds, reptiles, and fowls, have more gratitude to their masters than man has to his God.*" (Clarke)

c. **They cry out, but He does not answer, because of the pride of evil men:** When men cry out to God in such insincerity, Elihu said that God **does not answer** them, and He does not answer **because of the pride of evil men.**

i. Elihu said this with full knowledge that Job had complained that God would not answer him.

Therefore, Elihu freely associated Job with the insincere, proud, and **evil men**.

2. (13-16) *Elihu to Job: "God does not want to hear your empty talk."*

**Surely God will not listen to empty talk,
Nor will the Almighty regard it.
Although you say you do not see Him,
Yet justice *is* before Him, and you must wait for Him.
And now, because He has not punished in His anger,
Nor taken much notice of folly,
Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain;
He multiplies words without knowledge."**

a. **Surely God will not listen to empty talk:** Elihu resumed his harsh approach towards Job. His idea was that God did not hear Job because he was a false, **empty** seeker.

i. "The Elihus of this world do not care about the cruelty of their perfectionist advice and its unreality. Their theory is saved; that is what matters." (Andersen)

b. **Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him:** Elihu wanted Job to see that God was indeed right in front of him, present in the fact of **justice**. If Job would only be patient (**you must wait for Him**), he would see the God whom he claimed was hidden from him.

i. "To complain *that you do not see him* is an impertinence, when the fault lies with Job." (Andersen)

c. **Because He has not punished in His anger... therefore Job opens his mouth in vain:** Again, Elihu was very harsh with Job. "Job, if God were to punish you as you deserve, you would not be able to even open your

mouth in the vain way that you do. You also speak ignorantly” (**he multiplies words without knowledge**).

i. “Since verse 15 is quite obscure, we are left to guess that it means that Elihu is accusing Job of completely misunderstanding God’s unresponsiveness as heedlessness, whereas in fact God is holding His anger in. Job is guilty of despising God’s longsuffering.” (Andersen)

ii. Elihu saw that God had not yet answered Job, at least not in any way that Job had hoped. Therefore he said, “**Job opens his mouth in vain.**” The idea was, “Job, if you were really a godly man, then God would have answered you by now. The fact that He hasn’t proves your ungodliness.”

Elihu Extols God's Greatness

Job 36:1 (1-2) Be patient and listen a little longer to what I am saying on God's behalf.

Job 36:3 My knowledge is wide; I will use what I know to show that God, my Creator, is just.

Job 36:4 Nothing I say to you is false; you see before you a truly wise man.

Job 36:5 How strong God is! He despises no one; there is nothing he doesn't understand.

Job 36:6 He does not let sinners live on, and he always treats the poor with justice.

Job 36:7 He protects those who are righteous; he allows them to rule like kings and lets them be honored forever.

Job 36:8 But if people are bound in chains, suffering for what they have done,

Job 36:9 God shows them their sins and their pride.

Job 36:10 He makes them listen to his warning to turn away from evil.

Job 36:11 If they obey God and serve him, they live out their lives in peace and prosperity.

Job 36:12 But if not, they will die in ignorance and cross the stream into the world of the dead.

Job 36:13 Those who are godless keep on being angry, and even when punished, they don't pray for help.

Job 36:14 They die while they are still young, worn out by a life of disgrace.

Job 36:15 But God teaches people through suffering and uses distress to open their eyes.

Job 36:16 God brought you out of trouble, and let you enjoy security; your table was piled high with food.

Job 36:17 But now you are being punished as you deserve.

Job 36:18 Be careful not to let bribes deceive you, or riches lead you astray.

Job 36:19 It will do you no good to cry out for help; all your strength can't help you now.

Job 36:20 Don't wish for night to come, the time when nations will perish.

Job 36:21 Be careful not to turn to evil; your suffering was sent to keep you from it.

Job 36:22 Remember how great is God's power; he is the greatest teacher of all.

Job 36:23 No one can tell God what to do or accuse him of doing evil.

Job 36:24 He has always been praised for what he does; you also must praise him.

Job 36:25 Everyone has seen what he has done; but we can only watch from a distance.

Job 36:26 We cannot fully know his greatness or count the number of his years.

Job 36:27 It is God who takes water from the earth and turns it into drops of rain.

Job 36:28 He lets the rain pour from the clouds in showers for all human beings.

Job 36:29 No one knows how the clouds move or how the thunder roars through the sky, where God dwells.

Job 36:30 He sends lightning through all the sky, but the depths of the sea remain dark.

Job 36:31 This is how he feeds the people and provides an abundance of food.

Job 36:32 He seizes the lightning with his hands and commands it to hit the mark.

Job 36:33 Thunder announces the approaching storm, and the cattle know it is coming.

Job 36:1-33

Job 36 – Elihu Teaches Job about God

A. Elihu teaches Job about the justice and righteousness of God.

1. (1-4) Elihu: *"There are yet words to speak on God's behalf."*

Elihu also proceeded and said:

"Bear with me a little, and I will show you

That *there are* yet words to speak on God's behalf.

I will fetch my knowledge from afar;

I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

For truly my words *are* not false;

One who is perfect in knowledge *is* with you."

a. **Bear with me a little, and I will show you that there are yet words to speak on God's behalf:**

Apparently young Elihu saw that his listeners were becoming uncomfortable with his condemnation and

long-windedness. He begs for them to keep listening and insists that he is speaking **on God's behalf**.

i. Young Elihu spoke with a *directness* Job's other friends did not use (Job 33:1; Job 33:31; Job 34:5; Job 34:7, and so forth). He also spoke with an *authority* that Job's other friends did not. Job's other friends appealed to conventional, ancient wisdom and common knowledge. Elihu claimed to speak **on God's behalf**.

ii. "It seems as if Elihu is giving himself such a certificate of genius, as if the brash young man is all unaware of its astounding presumption." (Andersen)

iii. "I admire Elihu's attempt at brevity; I call it an attempt, for I am not quite sure that he succeeded, for he filled two chapters more. Yet he said, 'Suffer me a little'; and thereby promised to make his oration as short as he could. Some lengthy divines, with their many divisions, their 'Finallies,' and 'Lastlies,' and concluding observations, spin and spin, and cause their congregations to suffer, and that not a little, but exceeding much. It is well when we have anything good to say to use as few words as possible, for if brevity be not the garment of grace it is the soul of wit, and all our wits should be set to work to put gospel teaching into such a form that it will be the better received. Assuredly, short and pointed addresses are more likely to reach the heart than long and dreary sermons." (Spurgeon)

iv. Elihu received a better hearing than the unnamed man who spoke to Aristotle, in an anecdote mentioned by John Trapp: "When a great trifler had made an empty discourse in the presence of Aristotle, and then cried for mercy for troubling him so long:

You have not troubled me at all, said he, for I scarce hearkened to any one word you said all this while."

b. **I will fetch my knowledge from afar... One who is perfect in knowledge is with you:** Though Elihu was obviously too confident in his **knowledge** and his **words**, the **One** with perfect knowledge was probably a reference to God here.

i. "It is certainly unlikely Elihu would claim for himself the same perfection he attributes to God." (Smick) Bullinger observed, "From Job 37:16, it is clear that God is meant, and not the speaker."

ii. If he was speaking of himself, then Poole has explained his idea: "And the meaning may be this, Thou hast not to do with a novice, but with one who hath accurately considered, and through God's grace doth fully understand, these matters; therefore hearken to me."

iii. "Here is the charismatic paradox in a nutshell. Probably Elihu does have a prophetic gift to receive 'knowledge from afar.' But even direct revelations from God do not make a man 'perfect in knowledge.'" (Mason)

2. (5-12) God rewards the obedient and the disobedient perish.

**"Behold, God *is* mighty, but despises *no one*;
He *is* mighty in strength of understanding.
He does not preserve the life of the wicked,
But gives justice to the oppressed.
He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous;
But *they are* on the throne with kings,
For He has seated them forever,
And they are exalted.
And if *they are* bound in fetters,**

Held in the cords of affliction,
Then He tells them their work and their
transgressions;
That they have acted defiantly.
He also opens their ear to instruction,
And commands that they turn from iniquity.
If they obey and serve *Him*,
They shall spend their days in prosperity,
And their years in pleasures.
But if they do not obey,
They shall perish by the sword,
And they shall die without knowledge."

a. **Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one:**
Here, Elihu again promoted the ideas of God's power and perfect justice. In His perfect justice, God punishes the **wicked** and works for **the oppressed**.

i. There is a wonderful thought in the phrase **God is mighty, but despises no one**. We might have thought that the **mighty** God would ignore or despise man; yet He does not. "It is because God is so great that He despises none. If He were less than infinite, He might overlook." (Meyer)

ii. "If God were little, he might despise the little; if he were weak he would disdain the weak; if he were untrue he would be supercilious to those about him; but, seeing he is none of these, but is God over all blessed for ever, the only wise God, we have to deal with one who, though he be high, hath respect unto the lowly; who, though he humbleth himself even to observe the things which are done in heaven, yet despiseth not the cry of the humble. The magnanimity of God is the reason why he despiseth not any." (Spurgeon)

b. **He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous:** Since Job had often said and felt that God *had* removed His eyes from him, Elihu is clearly counting Job among the wicked. In Elihu's mind, the freedom God has for the righteous (*not* being **held in the cords of affliction**) does not belong to Job, because Job is not among **the righteous**.

i. "The example Elihu chooses is reminiscent of the Joseph story, in spite of the plural *kings* (Job 36:7), which has worried some scholars. Certainly Joseph is another classic case of a person treated unjustly, and that more than once." (Andersen)

ii. In Elihu's mind, the righteous man was marked by many things; things that were conspicuously absent from the life of Job.

- God's eyes are upon the righteous (**He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous**).

- The righteous are exalted (**they are on the throne with kings**).

- If the righteous are bound, God convicts them, sets them free, and they are restored to prosperity and pleasures (**if they are bound in fetters... He tells them their works and their transgressions... if they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity**).

c. **If they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword:** This was another one of Elihu's strong warnings to Job. He warned Job to repent and to *not* be like the disobedient who **perish** and who **die without knowledge**.

3. (13-15) *The sad fate of the hypocrite.*

**"But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath;
They do not cry for help when He binds them.**

**They die in youth,
And their life *ends* among the perverted persons.
He delivers the poor in their affliction,
And opens their ears in oppression."**

a. **The hypocrites in heart store up wrath:** Elihu thought Job was a hypocrite for continuing to deny his guilt. He felt Job was putting himself under a greater and greater outpouring of God's wrath.

b. **Their life ends among the perverted persons:** Elihu painted a bleak future for an unrepentant Job.

i. **Perverved persons:** "*Baqdeeshiym*, among the whores, harlots, prostitutes, and sodomites. In this sense the word is used, though it also signifies *consecrated persons*; but we know that in idolatry characters of this kind were consecrated to Baal and Ashtaroth, Venus, Priapus, etc." (Clarke)

B. Elihu teaches Job about the greatness of God.

1. (16-21) *Elihu to Job: "What God would have done for you."*

"Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress,

***Into* a broad place where *there is* no restraint;**

And what is set on your table *would be* full of richness.

**But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked;
Judgment and justice take hold *of you*.**

Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest He take you away with *one* blow;

For a large ransom would not help you avoid *it*.

Will your riches,

Or all the mighty forces,

Keep you from distress?

Do not desire the night,

**When people are cut off in their place.
Take heed, do not turn to iniquity,
For you have chosen this rather than affliction."**

a. **Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress:** Elihu here spoke to Job about what God *would have* done for Job, *if Job* would have only repented as he should have (at least in Elihu's perspective).

i. If Job would have only repented then God would have:

- Brought Job out of his **dire distress**.
- Brought Job into a **broad place where there is no restraint**.
- Brought Job to a **table... full of richness**.

b. **But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked:** For Elihu, Job's problems were easy to diagnose. Job did not have the blessings God gives to the obedient and repentant; therefore Job was not obedient and repentant. Instead, he was **filled with the judgment due the wicked**.

i. In saying "**judgment and justice take hold of you**," Elihu could not be clearer. There was one reason for Job's crisis and loss; it was that the **judgment and justice** of God were against him. It is helpful to remind ourselves that Job Chapters 1 and 2 make it clear that *Elihu was absolutely wrong* in this analysis.

c. **Will your riches, or all the mighty forces, keep you from distress:** Elihu assumed what many people assume – that rich people trust in their riches. This is often true, perhaps *almost always* true, but it was not true in Job's case and it was wrong for Elihu to assume it.

d. **You have chosen this rather than affliction:** "Job, all this suffering and agony is *your choice*. It could all be different as soon as you repent and turn back to God." It was this kind of counsel that drove Job crazy, because it demanded that he forsake his integrity and make a show of repentance just to please his friends.

i. Job had his own faults during this extended dialogue with his friends, sins that he will later repent of (Job 42:1-6); yet he showed amazing strength to hold to his integrity in the face of this constant barrage of accusations against his friends.

2. (22-25) *Elihu again remembers the greatness of God.*

**"Behold, God is exalted by His power;
Who teaches like Him?
Who has assigned Him His way,
Or who has said, 'You have done wrong'?"**

**"Remember to magnify His work,
Of which men have sung.
Everyone has seen it;
Man looks on *it* from afar."**

a. **Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him:** Elihu here again wanted to exalt God in the eyes of Job, thinking that Job's problem was that he had too low a view of God, and too high a view of himself.

i. This begins a section where a marked change comes over Elihu. As the following verses indicate, he probably spoke with his eye upon a rapidly approaching storm with all of its rain and wind and thunder and dark clouds. A sudden and wonderful inspiration filled Elihu, and he spoke in a very different way than his previous harsh and condemning way towards Job.

ii. "The change that comes over Elihu at this point, and that continues and builds in power to the end of his discourse, is so dramatic that the reader should be bowled over by it. For here something strange and wonderful begins to happen to this young man: he opens his mouth and speaks by the unction of the Holy Spirit!" (Mason)

iii. "It has been suggested that this last part of Elihu's speech really consists in a word description of what was happening around him at the moment. When presently God speaks, He speaks out of a whirlwind, and the idea is that it was this great storm in its approach and force which Elihu described." (Morgan)

iv. "And this I dare say, saith a learned interpreter here, that there is not extant any poem, either of the Greeks or Latins, which may be compared with this stately eloquence of Elihu in describing those natural effects which are caused in the air." (Trapp)

b. Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung: Job himself had magnified the work of God, and was well aware of the power, majesty, and glory of God.

i. As the storm approached Job and his friends, and as Elihu continued to describe it, we will recognize in Job 38 that *the LORD was in this storm, ready to speak to him.*

ii. "It is also instructive to note the contrast between Job and Elihu, as evidenced by their different responses to the Lord's appearing. At the approach of God the more mature man of faith is silent; a holy hush falls over him, and his lips grow as still as his heart. But the young man Elihu keeps on babbling. Even if we grant that his babbling is inspired, there

may yet be reason to suspect that it is, compared with the humble silence of Job, still babbling.” (Mason)

3. (26-33) *The unsearchable greatness of God is expressed in the storm.*

**“Behold, God *is* great, and we do not know *Him*;
Nor can the number of His years *be* discovered.
For He draws up drops of water,
Which distill as rain from the mist,
Which the clouds drop down
And pour abundantly on man.
Indeed, can *anyone* understand the spreading of
clouds,
The thunder from His canopy?
Look, He scatters his light upon it,
And covers the depths of the sea.
For by these He judges the peoples;
He gives food in abundance.
He covers *His* hands with lightning,
And commands it to strike.
His thunder declares it,
The cattle also, concerning the rising *storm*.”**

a. **Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him:**
Elihu again promoted the concept of the transcendence of God. He heard and sensed how Job demanded answers from God, and counseled Job to understand that God was beyond Job and beyond explaining things to Job.

i. This was Elihu’s most truthful and powerful argument, yet the argument itself was based on the premise that Job had to do this in light of his great transgression against God. It was a powerful, good principle wrongly applied to Job’s situation.

b. **For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist:** In this beautiful section, Elihu analyzed the water cycle of evaporation, distillation, and

rain and used it as an example of God's brilliance and beauty as a Designer.

i. "The clouds and the rain display God's astonishing control of the world in operations of such delicacy and strength that men can neither understand nor imitate them." (Andersen)

ii. Elihu's wisdom in analyzing the water cycle has led people to wrongly conclude that the Book of Job must have been written later than commonly supposed. "The phenomenon of condensation (Job 36:27 b) and precipitation (Job 36:28), while not technically understood, was certainly observable. But evaporation (Job 36:27) is not. Duhm therefore considered this proof that the Elihu speeches came a few centuries later than the divine speeches since meteorological knowledge would have been obtained from the Greeks." (Smick)

iii. **His thunder declares it:** "And it is worthy of remark that every wicked man trembles at the *noise of thunder* and the *flash of lightning*, and considers this a *treasury of Divine wrath*, emphatically called among us *the artillery of the skies*; and whenever the noise is heard, it is considered *the voice of God*." (Clarke)

iv. **The cattle also, concerning the rising storm:** "Because divers cattle are very sagacious in this matter, and do not only perceive the rain when it is ready to fall, but foresee it at some distance by the vapours, which are drawn up by the sun in great abundance, and by divers motions and actions, give men timely notice of it, as hath been observed not only by husbandmen, but also by learned authors." (Poole)

Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty

Job 37:1 The storm makes my heart beat wildly.

Job 37:2 Listen, all of you, to the voice of God, to the thunder that comes from his mouth.

Job 37:3 He sends the lightning across the sky, from one end of the earth to the other.

Job 37:4 Then the roar of his voice is heard, the majestic sound of thunder, and all the while the lightning flashes.

Job 37:5 At God's command amazing things happen, wonderful things that we can't understand.

Job 37:6 He commands snow to fall on the earth, and sends torrents of drenching rain.

Job 37:7 He brings our work to a stop; he shows us what he can do.

Job 37:8 The wild animals go to their dens.

Job 37:9 The storm winds come from the south, and the biting cold from the north.

Job 37:10 The breath of God freezes the waters, and turns them to solid ice.

Job 37:11 Lightning flashes from the clouds,

Job 37:12 as they move at God's will. They do all that God commands, everywhere throughout the world.

Job 37:13 God sends rain to water the earth; he may send it to punish us, or to show us his favor.

Job 37:14 Pause a moment, Job, and listen; consider the wonderful things God does.

Job 37:15 Do you know how God gives the command and makes lightning flash from the clouds?

Job 37:16 Do you know how clouds float in the sky, the work of God's amazing skill?

Job 37:17 No, you can only suffer in the heat when the south wind oppresses the land.

Job 37:18 Can you help God stretch out the sky and make it as hard as polished metal?

Job 37:19 Teach us what to say to God; our minds are blank; we have nothing to say.

Job 37:20 I won't ask to speak with God; why should I give him a chance to destroy me?

Job 37:21 And now the light in the sky is dazzling, too bright for us to look at it; and the sky has been swept clean by the wind.

Job 37:22 A golden glow is seen in the north, and the glory of God fills us with awe.

Job 37:23 God's power is so great that we cannot come near him; he is righteous and just in his dealings with us.

Job 37:24 No wonder, then, that everyone is awed by him, and that he ignores those who claim to be wise.

Job 37:1-24

Job 37 – Elihu Sees God in the Storm

A. The great voice of God.

1. (1-5) The thunder of His voice.

**“At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.**

**Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling *that* comes from His mouth.**

**He sends it forth under the whole heaven,
His lightning to the ends of the earth.**

After it a voice roars;

He thunders with His majestic voice,

And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.

God thunders marvelously with His voice;

He does great things which we cannot comprehend.

- a. **Hear attentively the thunder of His voice:** Elihu felt that Job needed a good dose of the greatness of God. It was good advice wrongly applied to Job's situation.

Elihu did rightly understand that the mighty sound of **thunder** seems to man to be the **voice** of God.

i. "Nor is there a sound in nature more descriptive of, or more becoming, the majesty of God, than that of thunder. We hear the *breeze* in its *rustling*, the *rain* in its *pattering*, the *hail* in its *rattling*, the *wind* in its *hollow howlings*, the *cataract* in its *dash*, the *bull* in his *bellowing*, the *lion* in his *roar*; but we hear God, the Almighty, the Omnipresent, in the continuous peal of thunder! This sound, and this sound only, becomes the majesty of Jehovah." (Clarke)

ii. "The Bible contains some magnificent descriptions of the thunderstorm. Psalms 29 is the best of these, but Elihu's poem comes a close second." (Andersen)

b. **He does great things which we cannot comprehend**: This is a repetition of Elihu's theme that Job had transgressed the line that separates God and man, and that Job presumed to know more than he could or should know from God. In this, Elihu was partially correct.

2. (6-13) *What the voice of God can do.*

**For He says to the snow,
'Fall on the earth';**

Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.

**He seals the hand of every man,
That all men may know His work.**

**The beasts go into dens,
And remain in their lairs.**

**From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind,
And cold from the scattering winds of the north.**

**By the breath of God ice is given,
And the broad waters are frozen.**

Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds;

**He scatters His bright clouds.
And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance,
That they may do whatever He commands them
On the face of the whole earth.
He causes it to come,
Whether for correction,
Or for His land,
Or for mercy."**

a. **For He says to the snow:** Elihu previously spoke of God's voice as being like mighty thunder. Now, he considered that the voice of God commanded **the snow, the gentle rain, and the heavy rain**; His breath makes **ice** and freezes the **broad waters**.

b. **He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know His work:** The idea is that when God sends the cold and the snow, the farmer cannot do his work. His hand is sealed from further effort, and the time away from work makes him reflect on the **work** of God.

i. "When the Lord seals up a man's hand, he is unable to perform his labor. The Lord has an object in this, namely, 'that, all men may know *his* work.' When they cannot do their own work, they are intended to observe the works of God." (Spurgeon)

ii. "To Elihu the weather in all its glory is the glory of God, and God stops people from their work so they can see it... Is not the whole book of *Job* about men who have been stopped from their work? It is about an enormous work stoppage, an enormous inconvenience that has fallen out of the sky and forced five busy people to drop everything they were doing and to turn for a while to a more important task." (Mason)

c. **And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He**

commands them: Elihu wanted Job to not only appreciate the greatness of God, but also the *submission of creation*. The implication was that unrepentant Job should submit to God the way His creation does.

i. "In many ways a storm serves as an ideal metaphor for the spiritual problems in *Job*. For while a storm presents all the outward appearance of chaos, of nature run amok, still throughout it all we know that the Creator remains in absolute control of every detail." (Mason)

B. Elihu's final advice to Job.

1. (14-18) *Elihu to Job: "You don't know as much as you think you do."*

"Listen to this, O Job;

Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

Do you know when God dispatches them,

And causes the light of His cloud to shine?

Do you know how the clouds are balanced,

Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?

Why are your garments hot,

When He quiets the earth by the south *wind*?

With Him, have you spread out the skies,

Strong as a cast metal mirror?"

a. **Listen to this, O Job:** Young Elihu again appealed to Job in a very direct and personal way, more personal than the three other friends of Job had.

i. "If there be so much matter of wonder and adoration in the most obvious and sensible works of God, how wonderful must his deep and secret counsels and judgments be! And therefore it would better become thee humbly to admire, and quietly to

submit to them, than to murmur or quarrel with them." (Poole)

ii. "Elihu condemns Job sorrowfully, but absolutely; he declares that not only has Job made shipwreck of his faith, but he has become defiant in silencing his friends." (Chambers)

b. Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God: Significantly, God will address Job among similar lines when God begins to speak starting at Job 38 (**Do you know... Do you know**). Though Elihu here had many of the right ideas, he presented them with a *wrong* premise, the premise that Job's whole crisis came from his sin.

i. "If Job could not understand how God performs these marvels much less assist him, how then could he understand the far less obvious mysteries of God's providence." (Smick)

ii. "He had convinced Job of his ignorance, and now he will of his impotence and imbecility." (Trapp)

2. (19-24) *Elihu to Job: "Stop trying to speak to God, and simply fear Him instead."*

**"Teach us what we should say to Him,
For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.
Should He be told that I *wish to speak*?
If a man were to speak, surely he would be
swallowed up.
Even now *men* cannot look at the light *when it is*
bright in the skies,
When the wind has passed and cleared them.
He comes from the north *as golden splendor*;
With God *is* awesome majesty.
As *for* the Almighty, we cannot find Him;
He *is* excellent in power,**

**In judgment and abundant justice;
He does not oppress.
Therefore men fear Him;
He shows no partiality to any *who are wise of heart.*"**

a. **Teach us what we should say to Him:** Here, Elihu confronted what he believed to be Job's arrogance in saying that man deserved an audience or a justification from God. "Job, if you insist that God owes us an audience, then please **teach us what we should say to Him.**"

i. "He was endeavouring to bring him to realize the impossibility of knowing God perfectly, and the consequent folly of his complainings. The truth so expressed is a great one, and had application to Elihu also. He could not find God out, and he did not understand the mystery of Job's sufferings." (Morgan)

ii. "These chapters intensify the sense of the loneliness and solitude of Job. He stands there, silent and alone, with none to sympathize with him, none to enter into his perplexities; condemned as impious, heretical, and even blasphemous, by the concordant voice of friends and bystanders; alike by his own generation, and by that which was growing up to take its place; yet 'enduring to the end,' *contra mundum – contra ecclesiam*, we may almost add – *unus*, and awaiting with trust and confidence the verdict of his God." (Bradley)

iii. **He comes from the north as golden splendor:** "The meaning is that man by nature is utterly ignorant. He knows nothing of God in heaven above. All is darkness there to him. Yet God is there in all His wondrous glory. And just as when a storm has dispersed all the dark clouds and cleared the air, so,

when God reveals Himself, His light and truth are seen.” (Bullinger)

b. **As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him:** Elihu returned to his theme of God’s distance and transcendence. He wanted to discourage Job from insisting that God owed him (or anyone else) an audience or an explanation.

i. Significantly, the God whom Elihu believed to be utterly beyond and unreachable by man (**we cannot find Him**) *has come in the storm, and will speak to Job*. It seems that God had finally heard enough of the almost-right wisdom of man, and had heard enough of this talk that He was so beyond man that He was beyond reach. God was about to confront not only Job, but his three friends, and especially Elihu, with both His words and His presence.

ii. “The rushing mighty wind, for which the description of the thunder and lightning had prepared poor, confounded, astonished Job, proclaims the presence of Yahweh: and out of this whirlwind God answers for and proclaims himself! Reader, canst thou not conceive something of what these men felt? Art thou not astonished, perplexed, confounded, in reading over these descriptions of the thunder of God’s power? Prepare, then, to hear the voice of God himself out of this whirlwind.” (Clarke)

iii. “In the story of *Job*, too, the Lord has apparently been sound asleep until now, peacefully curled up in the stern of the boat while Job has been struggling all alone with the wind and the waves... in the case of Job He let the storm rage for 37 chapters, until finally He calmed not the storm itself, but Job’s heart.” (Mason)

The Lord Answers Job

Job 38:1 Then out of the storm the LORD spoke to Job.

Job 38:2 Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words?

Job 38:3 Now stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you.

Job 38:4 Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it.

Job 38:5 Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answers?

Job 38:6 What holds up the pillars that support the earth? Who laid the cornerstone of the world?

Job 38:7 In the dawn of that day the stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.

Job 38:8 Who closed the gates to hold back the sea when it burst from the womb of the earth?

Job 38:9 It was I who covered the sea with clouds and wrapped it in darkness.

Job 38:10 I marked a boundary for the sea and kept it behind bolted gates.

Job 38:11 I told it, "So far and no farther! Here your powerful waves must stop."

Job 38:12 Job, have you ever in all your life commanded a day to dawn?

Job 38:13 Have you ordered the dawn to seize the earth and shake the wicked from their hiding places?

Job 38:14 Daylight makes the hills and valleys stand out like the folds of a garment, clear as the imprint of a seal on clay.

Job 38:15 The light of day is too bright for the wicked and restrains them from doing violence.

Job 38:16 Have you been to the springs in the depths of the sea? Have you walked on the floor of the ocean?

Job 38:17 Has anyone ever shown you the gates that guard the dark world of the dead?

Job 38:18 Have you any idea how big the world is? Answer me if you know.

Job 38:19 Do you know where the light comes from or what the source of darkness is?

Job 38:20 Can you show them how far to go, or send them back again?

Job 38:21 I am sure you can, because you're so old and were there when the world was made!

Job 38:22 Have you ever visited the storerooms, where I keep the snow and the hail?

Job 38:23 I keep them ready for times of trouble, for days of battle and war.

Job 38:24 Have you been to the place where the sun comes up, or the place from which the east wind blows?

Job 38:25 Who dug a channel for the pouring rain and cleared the way for the thunderstorm?

Job 38:26 Who makes rain fall where no one lives?

Job 38:27 Who waters the dry and thirsty land, so that grass springs up?

Job 38:28 Does either the rain or the dew have a father?

Job 38:29 Who is the mother of the ice and the frost,

Job 38:30 which turn the waters to stone and freeze the face of the sea?

Job 38:31 Can you tie the Pleiades together or loosen the bonds that hold Orion?

Job 38:32 Can you guide the stars season by season and direct the Big and the Little Dipper?

Job 38:33 Do you know the laws that govern the skies, and can you make them apply to the earth?

Job 38:34 Can you shout orders to the clouds and make them drench you with rain?

Job 38:35 And if you command the lightning to flash, will it come to you and say, "At your service"?

Job 38:36 Who tells the ibis when the Nile will flood, or who tells the rooster that rain will fall?

Job 38:37 Who is wise enough to count the clouds and tilt them over to pour out the rain,

Job 38:38 rain that hardens the dust into lumps?

Job 38:39 Do you find food for lions to eat, and satisfy hungry young lions

Job 38:40 when they hide in their caves, or lie in wait in their dens?

Job 38:41 Who is it that feeds the ravens when they wander about hungry, when their young cry to me for food?

Job 38:1-41

Job 38 – God Speaks to Job

A. God speaks to Job.

1. (1) *The LORD speaks to Job from the whirlwind.*

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

a. **Then the LORD:** Over the previous 35 chapters (since Job 2), God has been directly absent from the account. We read nothing of God's direct role in comforting, speaking to, or sustaining Job in the midst of his crisis. Over that time, Job has *ached* repeatedly for a word from God.

i. Elihu saw the coming storm and spoke about God's presence in such powerful phenomenon (Job 36:22 to Job 37:24). Yet now we hear God Himself speak to Job.

ii. God will indeed settle this dispute, but He will do it *His* way. Job wanted God to settle it by proving *him* right and explaining the reason for all his afflictions; Job's friends wanted God to prove *them* right and for Job to recognize his error. God will not satisfy either one of these expectations. Significantly, *God did not obviously answer Job's questions.*

iii. "At least, on first inspection, they do not seem to have anything to do with the central issue of why Job has suffered so severely when he has done everything humanly possible to maintain a good relationship with God. The Lord apparently says nothing about this." (Andersen)

b. The LORD answered Job: Significantly, God *did not* immediately or directly answer Job's friends; not the older friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, or Zophar), and not the young friend (Elihu). God **answered Job**.

i. Perhaps this was because Job was the one wrongly accused, and though he was wrong, he was *more right* than any of his friends.

ii. Perhaps this was because Job was the only one of the group to actively cry out to God and pray through the ordeal. Only Job talked to God; now the LORD will speak only to Job.

c. The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: Elihu saw an approaching storm and described it as an example of the power of God (Job 36:26 to Job 37:24). When he described the clearing of the storm, he probably spoke *before* the storm actually had cleared; now in this same storm, God speaks to Job.

i. "Doubtless, it refers to the storm which Elihu seems to see approaching (Job 37:15-24). The article refers

to something known or already intimated to the reader.” (Bullinger)

ii. Repeatedly the **whirlwind** is associated with the divine presence. It speaks to us of the powerful, unmanageable nature of God; that He is like a tornado that cannot be controlled or opposed.

- God brought Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind (2Ki 2:1-11).

- God’s presence is in the whirlwind (Psa 77:18; Nah 1:3).

- God’s coming is like a whirlwind (Isa 66:15; Jer 4:13; Jer 23:19).

- God appeared to Ezekiel in a whirlwind (Eze 1:4).

iii. “Job’s troubles began when a great wind killed his children (Job 1:19). The Lord was in that storm, and now He speaks from the tempest.” (Andersen)

2. (2-3) God calls Job to account.

“Who is this who darkens counsel

By words without knowledge?

Now prepare yourself like a man;

I will question you, and you shall answer Me.”

a. **Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge:** We may justly wonder to whom God asked this question. It might have been mainly directed to Elihu, who was the previous speaker, interrupted this word from the LORD, and who claimed to speak for God (Job 36:1-4).

i. “This has been variously interpreted as applying to Job, or to Elihu. Personally, I believe the reference was to Elihu.” (Morgan)

ii. Yet we can rightly say that all the characters in this drama did darken **counsel by words without knowledge**. Each one of them – Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu – spoke without accurate knowledge of what the reader knows from Job Chapters 1 and 2.

iii. We shouldn't think that God expected them to know what they could not know; rather, He expected them to appreciate that there were aspects to the matter known to God but hidden to man, and these aspects made sense of what seemed to make no sense.

b. **Now prepare yourself like a man:** Job had previously complained that God was battling against him in a great contest (Job 16:7-14 is one example). We might say that Job, without knowing, was really battling against Satan. Now he would indeed wrestle with God, and God challenged him to **prepare yourself like a man**.

i. "When a man acts like a man, God can speak to him, and he to God. That is a declaration of dignity."
(Morgan)

c. **I will question you, and you shall answer Me:** Job had insisted that God bring answers to him. God turned the matter around and told Job that before He would answer questions for Job, Job had some questions to answer before God.

i. The questions God had for Job were simply unanswerable and were meant to show Job that he really had no place to demand answers from God. Yet to see this appearance of God to Job only as a rebuke is a grave mistake. *God has now appeared to Job.* Job's greatest agony was that he felt God had abandoned him, and now he knew he was not

abandoned. Like any true revelation of God, there were plenty of elements that would make Job feel small before the greatness of God; yet it could not take away from the massive comfort Job felt in simply being once again consciously in the presence of God.

ii. "Job learned through the theophany that God had not abandoned him. And it gradually dawned on Job that without knowing why he was suffering he could face it, so long as he was assured that God was his friend." (Smick)

iii. We might imagine a small smile on the face of Job throughout this questioning, though it did appropriately humble him and bring him to repentance. Yet he smiled as a child who longs for his long-gone father might smile upon his father's return, *even while being corrected* – the child smiles because his father is here again.

iv. "Let us grant that the speeches of Yahweh at the end of *Job* do not have anything essentially new or surprising to offer. This is not what makes them stand out. What does? Only one feature sets these chapters apart, and that is the simple fact that it is the Lord Himself, and no one else, who speaks them." (Mason)

v. "That God speaks at all is enough for Job. All he needs to know is that everything is still all right between himself and God... To that extent it does not matter much what they talk about. Any topic will do for a satisfying conversation between friends. It is each other they are enjoying." (Andersen)

B. God questions Job regarding what he doesn't know.

1. (4-7) *Do you know the secrets of the creation of the world?*

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements?

Surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

To what were its foundations fastened?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

When the morning stars sang together,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

a. **Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth:** The intention of this question is obvious. Job was nowhere to be found when God **laid the foundations of the earth**. God was ancient in His power, wisdom, and might and Job could never be considered to be on the same level as God.

i. God is essentially saying, "Job, if you can answer these things, then you are fit to question Me. If you cannot answer these things, then you do not have a place to demand answers from Me."

ii. "Job was simply overwhelmed with mysteries and paradoxes for which he had no answers; but in the midst of it all he came to understand what was too good to be told, that God knows what he is doing in his universe." (Smick)

iii. These questions also served the purpose of reminding Job that there were *many* things that he did not know. "Is this difficulty, against which his soul is beating itself so fiercely, the one dark spot in a universe radiant elsewhere and transparent to his view? Or is he surrounded on all sides with cloud which his eye cannot penetrate?" (Bradley)

iv. This statement also reminds us that God indeed did lay **the foundations of the earth**; He is the creator

of heaven and earth just as the Genesis record states (Genesis 1).

b. **Who determined its measurements... To what were its foundations fastened:** Job was not present at the creation of the world, so he had no understanding of the **measurements** or **foundations** of the earth. The earth indeed has **measurements** and **foundations**; yet Job did not know them.

i. "What can Job give as a reason why God made the earth of such a length and breadth, and no more, when he could so easily have done it? How much less can he of God's secret and unsearchable judgments?" (Trapp)

c. **When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy:** This tells us that angelic beings (here called **morning stars** and **sons of God**) did in fact witness the creation of the earth; and they rejoiced at the glory, power, and wisdom of God in the creation.

i. "*Shouted for joy*; rejoiced in and blessed God for his works; whereby he intimates that they neither did advise or any way assist him in his works, nor dislike or censure any of his works, as Job had presumed to do with the works of his providence, which are not inferior to those of creation." (Poole)

ii. Since God said that **all the sons of God shouted for joy**, we can take from this that Lucifer fell from his exalted position as the anointed cherub who covers at sometime *after* God created the earth.

2. (8-11) *Do you know the boundaries of the sea?*

**"Or who shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth *and* issued from the womb;
When I made the clouds its garment,**

**And thick darkness its swaddling band;
When I fixed My limit for it,
And set bars and doors;
When I said, 'This far you may come, but no farther,
And here your proud waves must stop!'"**

a. **Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst forth:** This is probably a reference to God's work on the second day of creation (Gen 1:6-8), when God divided the waters and separated the land from the sea. Job wasn't around when God did this, and therefore had no idea how it was done.

i. "In the ancient Semitic world, control of the boisterous sea was a unique symbol of divine power and authority." (Smick)

b. **When I said, "This far you may come, but no farther, and here your proud waves must stop":** Job had no understanding of *how* God set the boundaries for the sea. He knew such boundaries existed, but could not explain how or why exactly they were set.

3. (12-18) Do you understand the nature of the earth?

"Have you commanded the morning since your days began,

**And caused the dawn to know its place,
That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
It takes on form like clay *under* a seal,
And stands out like a garment.
From the wicked their light is withheld,
And the upraised arm is broken."**

**"Have you entered the springs of the sea?
Or have you walked in search of the depths?
Have the gates of death been revealed to you?
Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?**

**Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Tell Me, if you know all this."**

a. **Have you commanded the morning since your days began:** This was a wonderful question for God to ask. "Job, have you made morning to come even once all the days of your life? Is this in your power to do?"

b. **Have you entered the springs of the sea:** Job probably didn't even know there were **springs of the sea**, much less ever enter them. He certainly didn't know other hidden things, such as **the gates of death** or **the breadth of the earth**.

4. (19-24) *Do you comprehend the nature of light, darkness, and the sky?*

**"Where *is* the way to the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where *is* its place,
That you may take it to its territory,
That you may know the paths to its home?
Do you know *it*, because you were born then,
Or *because* the number of your days *is* great?"**

**"Have you entered the treasury of snow,
Or have you seen the treasury of hail,
Which I have reserved for the time of trouble,
For the day of battle and war?
By what way is light diffused,
Or the east wind scattered over the earth?"**

a. **Where is the way to the dwelling of light:** It was as if God asked, "Job, do you know where light comes from? Do you know its nature and its source?"

i. "Here *light* and *darkness* are personified and associated as mysterious beings whose *place* is beyond man's reach. They need a guide to help them find their way home. God can do this, but Job cannot."
(Andersen)

b. **Do you know it, because you were born then, or because the number of your days is great:** Perhaps Job was so old and so wise that he did indeed know these things. If this were the case, God invited Job to speak up at any time.

c. **Have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war:** On several spectacular occasions in the Biblical record, God used and will use hail as bombs and missiles from heaven against those hostile to Him and His people.

i. **Hail** is frequently a tool of judgment against God's enemies, as seen against Egypt (Exo 9:24), the Canaanites (Jos 10:11), apostate Israel (Isa 28:2), and Gog and Magog (Eze 38:22), and against a rebellious earth in the Great Tribulation (Rev 16:20-21).

ii. "Here it is supposed that God has them stored in His treasuries (the Lord thinks about snow the way a man thinks about gold!)." (Andersen)

5. (25-30) *Do you understand the nature of rain and its effects?*

"Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water,

Or a path for the thunderbolt,

To cause it to rain on a land *where there is* no one,

A wilderness in which *there is* no man;

To satisfy the desolate waste,

And cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass?

Has the rain a father?

Or who has begotten the drops of dew?

From whose womb comes the ice?

And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth?

**The waters harden like stone,
And the surface of the deep is frozen.”**

a. **Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water:** In the previous section, God spoke of His wisdom in the management and use of snow and hail. Here, He spoke of His ability to engineer drainage systems and **a channel for the overflowing water.**

b. **Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew:** In Job 36:22 to Job 37:24 Elihu used the water cycle (as displayed in an approaching storm) as an example of God’s greatness. Here, God took credit for knowing how these things are designed and maintained, and asked Job if he had similar knowledge.

i. God showed Job that man was completely unable to *cause* rain. Charles Spurgeon took this idea and likened rain to the grace of God. “If both Houses of Parliament were to be called together, and the Queen were to sit upon her throne of state, and they were unanimously to pass an act ordering the rain to fall, he that sitteth in the heavens would laugh, the Lord would have them in derision, for the key of the rain is in no hand but that of Jehovah. It is exactly so with the grace of God. You and I cannot command it. The presence of the most holy men in our midst would not of itself bring it. The most earnest preaching, the most Scriptural doctrine, the most faithful obedience to ordinances, would not make it necessary that we should receive grace. God must give it; he is an absolute Sovereign, and we are entirely dependent upon him.” (Spurgeon)

6. (31-33) *Do you know the nature of the constellations?*

**“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the belt of Orion?
Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season?**

**Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs?
Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?
Can you set their dominion over the earth?"**

a. **Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades:** God did not merely challenge Job on his lack of knowledge; He also exposed Job's lack of might and greatness in comparison to God. Obviously, Job was not able to manage or master or change any of the stars or constellations in the sky, yet God can.

i. With these high and almost outrageous examples pointing out what Job *did not* know, we should remember that God's purpose here was not to humiliate Job. Instead, God seems almost playful here in making the point that God is omniscient and man is not.

ii. **Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season:** "This is generally understood to mean the signs of the zodiac." (Clarke)

iii. "Whatever they are, the point is clear: they are bound and fettered by God, who leads them around the sky as He pleases, a thing no man can do." (Andersen)

b. **Do you know the ordinances of the heavens:** Like many in the ancient world, Job probably understood the arrangement and patterns in the starry sky, yet he could not even begin to explain the natural forces which governed this arrangement (**the ordinances of the heavens**).

7. (34-38) Do you know the nature of clouds, weather, and the human mind?

**"Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
That an abundance of water may cover you?
Can you send out lightnings, that they may go,**

**And say to you, 'Here we are!'
Who has put wisdom in the mind?
Or who has given understanding to the heart?
Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven,
When the dust hardens in clumps,
And the clods cling together?"**

a. **Can you lift up your voice to the clouds:** Job was not only powerless over the starry sky and constellations, he was also powerless over the **clouds** and **lightnings**. He was powerless over natural phenomenon, both far and near to him.

b. **Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart:** Job knew that man had intelligence and **wisdom**, and that this intelligence must have been given by an Intelligent Designer. Like all men, Job's intellectual capacity was not the product of random chance or mysterious processes; it was designed by a great Designer.

i. It is interesting to consider that modern science has made amazing progress on answering some of the questions God set to Job.

- Modern science understands much more about the measurements of the earth (Job 38:5).
- Modern science understands much more about the gravitational forces that keep the earth suspended (Job 38:6).
- Modern science knows much more about the meteorological and hydrological systems of the earth (Job 38:8-11; Job 38:16; Job 38:25-30).
- Modern science knows much more about the nature of light (Job 38:19-20).

ii. This increased knowledge is a wonderful and glorious thing, and scientific inquiry is to be applauded. It is a wonderful fulfillment of our abilities as creatures made in the image of God that we can investigate and better understand the natural world. Indeed, *it is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter* (Pro 25:2).

iii. Yet with all this increased knowledge – as wonderful and glorious as it is – mankind is really not much closer at all to answering these questions that God set to Job. We have filled in small details around the edges, but there is still a vast gap between the knowledge and wisdom of man and that of God.

iv. We might say that God's approach to Job in this section undercuts much of modern thinking. Enlightenment thinking (emanating from the 18th century) freed man from much superstition, but it also exalted man's reason (wisdom) as the measure of truth. It can be observed that God eloquently destroyed this overconfidence in human wisdom in this presentation to Job. It makes us ask the question, "What does man, with all his reason and wisdom, really know about his world?" Man does not know very much, and therefore must pursue knowledge with a humble trust in the God, who does know all.

8. (39-41) *Do you understand and master the animal kingdom?*

**"Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
When they crouch in *their* dens,
Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait?
Who provides food for the raven,**

**When its young ones cry to God,
And wander about for lack of food?"**

a. **Can you hunt prey for the lion:** In his speech to Job, God moved from the distant expanse of the constellations, down to the clouds, down to the human mind, and here still further down to simple animal instinct such as the ability to **hunt prey for the lion**. Job could not even do this; therefore, it was presumptuous for him to demand answers from God the way that he did.

b. **Who provides food for the raven:** God provides food for the birds (Mat 6:26); it would be impossible for Job or any other man to do so. God here is reminding Job of the distance between Himself and Job.

i. "The choice is somewhat random, as if Yahweh is saying, 'Here are only a few specimens of all my creatures, great and small, winged and earthbound, wild and tamed – but all are under my care and dominion.'" (Smick)

Job 39:1 Do you know when mountain goats are born?
Have you watched wild deer give birth?

Job 39:2 Do you know how long they carry their young? Do
you know the time for their birth?

Job 39:3 Do you know when they will crouch down and
bring their young into the world?

Job 39:4 In the wilds their young grow strong; they go
away and don't come back.

Job 39:5 Who gave the wild donkeys their freedom? Who
turned them loose and let them roam?

Job 39:6 I gave them the desert to be their home, and let
them live on the salt plains.

Job 39:7 They keep far away from the noisy cities, and no
one can tame them and make them work.

Job 39:8 The mountains are the pastures where they feed, where they search for anything green to eat.

Job 39:9 Will a wild ox work for you? Is he willing to spend the night in your stable?

Job 39:10 Can you hold one with a rope and make him plow? Or make him pull a harrow in your fields?

Job 39:11 Can you rely on his great strength and expect him to do your heavy work?

Job 39:12 Do you expect him to bring in your harvest and gather the grain from your threshing place?

Job 39:13 How fast the wings of an ostrich beat! But no ostrich can fly like a stork.

Job 39:14 The ostrich leaves her eggs on the ground for the heat in the soil to warm them.

Job 39:15 She is unaware that a foot may crush them or a wild animal break them.

Job 39:16 She acts as if the eggs were not hers, and is unconcerned that her efforts were wasted.

Job 39:17 It was I who made her foolish and did not give her wisdom.

Job 39:18 But when she begins to run, she can laugh at any horse and rider.

Job 39:19 Was it you, Job, who made horses so strong and gave them their flowing manes?

Job 39:20 Did you make them leap like locusts and frighten people with their snorting?

Job 39:21 They eagerly paw the ground in the valley; they rush into battle with all their strength.

Job 39:22 They do not know the meaning of fear, and no sword can turn them back.

Job 39:23 The weapons which their riders carry rattle and flash in the sun.

Job 39:24 Trembling with excitement, the horses race ahead; when the trumpet blows, they can't stand still.

Job 39:25 At each blast of the trumpet they snort; they can smell a battle before they get near, and they hear the officers shouting commands.

Job 39:26 Does a hawk learn from you how to fly when it spreads its wings toward the south?

Job 39:27 Does an eagle wait for your command to build its nest high in the mountains?

Job 39:28 It makes its home on the highest rocks and makes the sharp peaks its fortress.

Job 39:29 From there it watches near and far for something to kill and eat.

Job 39:30 Around dead bodies the eagles gather, and the young eagles drink the blood.

Job 39:1-30

Job 39 – God Continues to Question Job

A. Regarding mountain goats, wild donkeys, and wild oxen.

1. (1-4) Do you know about or master the wild mountain goat?

“Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young?

***Or* can you mark when the deer gives birth?**

Can you number the months *that* they fulfill?

Or do you know the time when they bear young?

They bow down, They bring forth their young,

They deliver their offspring.

Their young ones are healthy,

They grow strong with grain;

They depart and do not return to them.”

a. **Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young:** Here, God kept bringing the level of knowledge down for Job. He could, quite conceivably, know such facts of nature from simple observation. Yet even this relatively low level of knowledge was beyond Job.

i. "The offspring of an ibex doe, unlike human infants that need years of care, can stand within minutes of birth and soon gambol off to thrive in the wild."
(Smick)

ii. Though Job didn't know these principles of the natural order, at the same time he had to admit that the natural order all seemed to work pretty well. All these questions brought Job before another truth: "I see that this world made by God operates with remarkable order and wisdom; can I deny His wisdom and government of all things just because there are things in my own life I can't understand? Or, should I simply trust this God who does all these other things so marvelously well?"

b. **They bow down, they bring forth their young:** Here, God reminded Job of the arrangement of growth and maturity He had engineered for the natural order. Did Job design this, or even know much about it?

2. (5-8) *Do you know about or master the wild donkey?*

"Who set the wild donkey free?

Who loosed the bonds of the onager,

Whose home I have made the wilderness,

And the barren land his dwelling?

He scorns the tumult of the city;

He does not heed the shouts of the driver.

The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,

And he searches after every green thing."

a. **Who set the wild donkey free:** Job had no knowledge of these facts of nature; he had even less *power* over the animals. These things belonged to God and not to Job.

i. The **onager** is another name for a wild donkey. "One of the most admired animals of the Old Testament world was the wild donkey. It was a compliment and a promise of an enviable freedom when the angel declared that Ishmael (Gen 16:12) would become 'a wild donkey of a man.' The creature was admired for both its freedom and its ability to survive under the harshest conditions." (Smick)

b. **The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searches after every green thing:** God knew how the wild donkey lived and was provided for; Job obviously did not.

i. "Why so weak and harmless a creature as the wild ass should be untamable, when the most savage lions and tigers have been tamed, and how there comes to be so vast a difference between the tame and the wild ass, thou canst give no reason." (Poole)

3. (9-12) *Do you know about or master the wild ox?*

"Will the wild ox be willing to serve you?

Will he be led by your manger?

Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes?

Or will he plow the valleys behind you?

Will you trust him because his strength *is* great?

Or will you leave your labor to him?

Will you trust him to bring home your grain,

And gather it to your threshing floor?"

a. **Will the wild ox be willing to serve you:** No one would doubt that Job was smarter than a **wild ox**; yet

the ox would not **serve** him. He lacked both in knowledge of and *mastery over* the natural world.

i. **Wild ox** is not a very good translation; nor is the classic King James Version translation of “unicorn” here. This animal is actually a fearsome, mighty, extinct animal known as the *aurochs*.

ii. “The beast in question is the aurochs, not the fabled ‘unicorn’ of the av. Extinct since 1627, this enormous animal was the most powerful of all hoofed beasts, exceeded in size only by the hippopotamus and the elephant. It is the standard symbol of strength in the Old Testament, where it is mentioned nine times.” (Andersen)

b. **Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes:** Understanding the fearsome nature of this ancient **wild ox**, God here made a humorous picture for Job. One might just as easily picture Job using a rhino to plow his field or put into his barn.

B. Regarding ostriches, horses, and hawks.

1. (13-18) *Do you understand the ostrich?*

**“The wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
But are her wings and pinions *like the* kindly stork’s?
For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
And warms them in the dust;
She forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may break them.
She treats her young harshly, as though *they were*
not hers;
Her labor is in vain, without concern,
Because God deprived her of wisdom,
And did not endow her with understanding.
When she lifts herself on high,
She scorns the horse and its rider.”**

a. **The wings of the ostrich wave proudly:** God here spoke of the **proudly** waving wings of the flightless **ostrich**. Perhaps Job could explain why a flightless bird has wings, or why a winged creature is flightless.

i. "It is what it is, a silly bird, because God made it so. Why? The comical account suggests that amid the profusion of creatures some were made to be useful to men, but some are there just for God's entertainment and ours." (Andersen)

ii. "This passage is remarkable in that it continues the first and only real humor in the book of *Job*. Leave it to God to pull a stunt like this, forcing a smile out of Job at a time when the poor fellow has been so intent on his misery." (Mason)

b. **God has deprived her of wisdom:** Here, God reminded Job that God is the dispenser of wisdom; He gives or withholds as pleases Him.

i. "The seeming cruelty to her young derives from the practice of driving off the yearlings when mating season arrives." (Smick)

ii. It was through wonderful and strange examples like **the ostrich** that God both taught and entertained Job. "Get used to My absurdity, and live by faith rather than by sight. Be like the ostrich: though you cannot fly, you can still flap your wings joyfully!" (Mason)

2. (19-25) *Do you understand or master the horse?*

"Have you given the horse strength?

Have you clothed his neck with thunder?

Can you frighten him like a locust?

His majestic snorting strikes terror.

He paws in the valley, and rejoices in *his* strength;

He gallops into the clash of arms.

**He mocks at fear, and is not frightened;
Nor does he turn back from the sword.
The quiver rattles against him,
The glittering spear and javelin.
He devours the distance with fierceness and rage;
Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet *has*
sounded.
At the *blast* of the trumpet he says, 'Aha!'
He smells the battle from afar,
The thunder of captains and shouting."**

a. **Have you given the horse strength:** Like many, Job could be impressed with the majestic strength of the **horse**. Yet he had no strength to *give* the horse; it came from God and not from Job or any other man.

i. "Can you make such an animal? Can you control him? Even the well-broken and best-trained mount might break from the restraints for the most skilled rider, so that even the one domesticated animal included in the list is not completely under the control of man." (Andersen)

b. **He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; nor does he turn back from the sword:** Job could give no explanation for the warrior nature of a horse, which operates against reason and the self-interest of the horse.

i. "In this creature therefore we have a clear instance of the wonderful power and wisdom of God. If the horse be so strong and warlike, what is the Almighty, that man of war?" (Trapp)

3. (26-30) *Do you understand or master the hawk or the eagle?*

**"Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,
And spread its wings toward the south?**

**Does the eagle mount up at your command,
And make its nest on high?
On the rocks it dwells and resides,
On the crag of the rock and the stronghold.
From there it spies out the prey;
Its eyes observe from afar.
Its young ones suck up blood;
And where the slain *are*, there it *is*."**

a. **Does the hawk fly by your wisdom:** After considering many land animals and the wisdom and mystery surrounding them, now God turned to a majestic bird – **the hawk**. Job could not explain, much less create the mechanics of flight for this noble bird.

i. "G.K. Chesterson writes that the way God describes all His fabulous creatures and parades them before Job, He makes each one seem 'like a monster walking in the sun. The whole is a sort of psalm or rhapsody of the sense of wonder. The maker of all things is astonished at the things He has Himself made.'" (Mason)

ii. God also wanted Job to be astonished at the *wildness* of it all; even allowing for the fact that God had given man *dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth* (Gen 1:26). Even with dominion over all these, man did not make or sustain these great wild animals. If mankind had so little authority over nature, could Job expect to have more control over the mysterious events of his life?

b. **Does the eagle mount up at your command:** Job was equally powerless to explain the **eagle** and its ways, much less to **command** it.

i. It might seem that God was being harsh with Job; but one must compare what God said to Job with what Job's accusers *thought* God should say to him. God did not come to Job as a judge or even a policeman; He came to Job as *a teacher* – a loving, winsome, vivid, powerful, humorous teacher. God was once again *with* Job (in His proper relation, of course), and that was enough for Job.

ii. "What these speeches do not contain is almost as important as what they do. The speeches do not reverse the Lord's judgment in the Prologue about Job. Satan was wrong in impugning Job's inner reasons for being righteous, and the friends were wrong about Job's outward conduct as a reason for his suffering... Job did not get the bill of indictment or verdict of innocence he wanted. But neither was he humiliated with a list of sins he had committed for which he was being punished." (Smick)

iii. "If we find it exasperating that God never gives Job any reasons for his long ordeal of suffering, then we have entirely missed the point of these final chapters. While it is true that the Lord's answer to Job is neither logical nor theological, this is not the same as saying that He gives no answer. The Lord *does* give an answer. His answer is Himself." (Mason)

iv. "One thought, and one only, is brought into the foreground. The world is full of mysteries, strange, unapproachable, overpowering mysteries that you cannot read. Trust, trust in the power, and in the wisdom, and in the goodness of Him, the Almighty One, who rules it." (Bradley)

Job 40:1 (1-2) Job, you challenged Almighty God; will you give up now, or will you answer?

Job Promises Silence

Job 40:3 (3-4) I spoke foolishly, LORD. What can I answer?
I will not try to say anything else.

Job 40:5 I have already said more than I should.

The Lord Challenges Job

Job 40:6 Then out of the storm the LORD spoke to Job once again.

Job 40:7 Now stand up straight and answer my questions.

Job 40:8 Are you trying to prove that I am unjust—to put me in the wrong and yourself in the right?

Job 40:9 Are you as strong as I am? Can your voice thunder as loud as mine?

Job 40:10 If so, stand up in your honor and pride; clothe yourself with majesty and glory.

Job 40:11 Look at those who are proud; pour out your anger and humble them.

Job 40:12 Yes, look at them and bring them down; crush the wicked where they stand.

Job 40:13 Bury them all in the ground; bind them in the world of the dead.

Job 40:14 Then I will be the first to praise you and admit that you won the victory yourself.

Job 40:15 Look at the monster Behemoth; I created him and I created you. He eats grass like a cow,

Job 40:16 but what strength there is in his body, and what power there is in his muscles!

Job 40:17 His tail stands up like a cedar, and the muscles in his legs are strong.

Job 40:18 His bones are as strong as bronze, and his legs are like iron bars.

Job 40:19 The most amazing of all my creatures! Only his Creator can defeat him.

Job 40:20 Grass to feed him grows on the hills where wild beasts play.

Job 40:21 He lies down under the thorn bushes, and hides among the reeds in the swamp.

Job 40:22 The thorn bushes and the willows by the stream give him shelter in their shade.

Job 40:23 He is not afraid of a rushing river; he is calm when the Jordan dashes in his face.

Job 40:24 Who can blind his eyes and capture him? Or who can catch his snout in a trap?

Job 40:1-24

Job 40 – The Power of God, the Power of Job, and the Power of Behemoth

A. God's challenge and Job's response.

1. (1-2) *God asks Job: "Will you now challenge Me?"*

Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct *Him*?

He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

a. **Moreover the LORD answered Job:** This continued God's challenge to Job, where God answered Job's *heart* without specifically answering Job's *questions*. It came *after* the extended time of fellowship, wonder, and teaching described in Job 38, 39.

b. **Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him:** Job, speaking from what he felt to be his God-absent agony, longed to contend with God. Yet after God appeared in His love and glory, Job now felt humbled about his previous demand. He rightly felt he was in no place to contend with **the Almighty**, much less to **correct Him** or rebuke Him.

i. We might say that Job and God had a wonderful time together in Job Chapters 38 and 39; God taught Job all about His greatness using the whole world as His classroom. Yet in it all, God remained God and Job remained a man.

2. (3-5) *Job is speechless before God.*

Then Job answered the LORD and said:

"Behold, I am vile;

What shall I answer You?

I lay my hand over my mouth.

Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;

Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

a. **Then Job answered the LORD:** Job had prayed often throughout the dialogue with his friends; he was the only one of the five to speak to God. Yet now Job spoke *after* God's great revelation of Himself and will speak with a quite different tone than he had before.

i. The different tone was *not* because Job's circumstances had substantially changed. He was still in misery and had lost virtually everything. The tone changed because while he once felt that God had forsaken him, now he felt and knew that God was with Him.

ii. Job also spoke with a completely different tone than he had with his companions. "It was Job's turn to speak again. But there would be no long speeches, no more rage, no more challenging his Creator." (Smick)

iii. "What a different tone is here!... The Master is come, and the servant who had contended with his fellows takes a lowly place of humility and silence." (Meyer)

b. **Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You:** Job once wanted to question God and with great passion

demanded to be brought into God's court (Job 31:35-37). Now, after the revelation of God and the restoration of a sense of relationship with Him, Job sensed his own relative position before God, and that he could not **answer** God.

i. **Behold, I am vile:** This "was a perfectly correct translation in the time of King James, because then *vile* did not mean what it has come to mean in the process of the years. In the Hebrew word there is no suggestion of moral failure. Quite literally it means, of no weight. Job did not here in the presence of the majesty of God confess moral perversity, but comparative insignificance." (Morgan)

ii. We must all be caused to see our "lightness" next to God. "Surely, if any man had a right to say I am *not* vile, it was Job; for, according to the testimony of God himself, he was 'a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.' Yet we find even this eminent saint when by his nearness to God he had received light enough to discover his own condition, exclaiming, 'Behold I am vile.'" (Spurgeon)

iii. "Job said, 'Behold, I am vile.' That word 'behold' implies that he was astonished. The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord's people, when they learn by experience that they are vile." (Spurgeon)

iv. All of the arguing of Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu could not bring Job to this place. Only the revelation of God could so humble Job and set him in his right place before the LORD. Job made his strong and sometimes outrageous statements when he felt, to the core of his soul, that the LORD had forsaken him. Now with his sense of the presence of the LORD

restored, Job could better see his proper place before God.

v. It is important to remember that God never did forsake Job; that while He withdrew the *sense* of His presence (and this was the cause of profound misery to Job), God was present with Job all along, strengthening Him with His unseen hand. Job could have never survived this ordeal without that unseen, unsensed hand of God supporting him.

vi. To bring Job to this place, we need not think that God was angry and harsh with Job in Chapters 38 and 39. It is still entirely possible – likely, indeed – that God’s manner with Job in those chapters was marked by warm and loving fellowship more than harsh rebuke. We remember that it is the goodness of God that leads man to repentance (Rom 2:4).

vii. “Standing in the midst of the universe, a being conscious of the majesty and the might of the wisdom and power of God, I say with perfect honesty and accuracy, ‘I am of small account.’ Standing in the presence of the Son of God, and listening to His teaching, I find that I am of greater value than the whole world, and to the heart of God of such value, that in order to my recovery He gave His only begotten Son.” (Morgan)

c. **I lay my hand over my mouth:** Job was now ashamed at the way he spoke about God and his situation. He would use his **hand** to stop his **mouth**, and he would **proceed no further**.

i. “Perhaps one of the most worshipful gestures of all is the uncommon one that Job here performs: covering the mouth with the hand. The act is a demonstration of total submission. One can fall on one’s face and yet continue to blubber and babble.

But to yield the tongue is to yield everything."
(Mason)

B. God once again teaches Job.

1. (6-7) God's challenge to Job.

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

**"Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me:"**

a. **Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:** God was still present with Job in the midst of the strong, untamable storm. He had not morphed into a gentler presence.

i. *"The whirlwind was renewed when God renewed his charge upon Job, whom he intended to humble more thoroughly than yet he had done."* (Poole)

b. **Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you and you shall answer Me:** In using the same phrasing that began this encounter (Job 38:3), God indicated to Job that He was not yet finished. There was more to show Job and to teach him from creation.

i. "Resume new strength, and prepare yourself for a second encounter; for I have not yet done with you."
(Trapp)

2. (8-14) God asks, "Job, are you fit to prove Me wrong or to save yourself?"

**"Would you indeed annul My judgment?
Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?
Have you an arm like God?
Or can you thunder with a voice like His?
Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and splendor,
And array yourself with glory and beauty.
Disperse the rage of your wrath;**

**Look on everyone *who is* proud, and humble him.
Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low;
Tread down the wicked in their place.
Hide them in the dust together,
Bind their faces in hidden *darkness*.
Then I will also confess to you
That your own right hand can save you."**

a. **Would you condemn Me that you may be justified:** Throughout Job's questioning of God, it could be said that he seemed more concerned with the defense of *his own* integrity rather than God's. This was natural (Job's integrity was under harsh attack), but not good.

i. We might say that Job fell into the trap of thinking that because he couldn't figure God out, that perhaps God wasn't fair. Yet in this larger section of God's revelation of Himself to Job, God has demonstrated that there are many things that Job doesn't know, and therefore was not a fit judge of God's ways.

b. **Have you an arm like God:** God here again reminded Job of the distance between Himself and Job. Yes, the sense of fellowship had been restored to Job; but it did not mean that God and Job were on the same level. There was still the distance that exists between God and man.

i. "In spite of its aggressive tone, this speech is really not a contradiction of anything that Job has said. In many respects it is very close to his own thought, and endorses his sustained contention that justice must be left to God. But it brings Job to the end of his quest by convincing him that he may and must hand the whole matter over completely to God more trustingly, less fretfully. And do it without insisting that God should first answer all his questions and give him a formal acquittal." (Andersen)

c. Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor... look on everyone who is proud, and humble him... tread down the wicked in their place: God challenged Job to do these things that only God can do. As Job recognized his inability, it reminded him of his proper place before God.

i. "'Can he,' he is asked, 'assume the royal robe of the Universal Monarch, can he *array himself with honour and majesty*? Can he with a glance *abase the proud*, and *tread down the wicked*? Has he the knowledge, has he the wisdom, has he the power, to seat himself in God's seat, and right the wrongs of the earth?'" (Bradley)

d. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you: With this, God strongly brought the point to Job. Since he could not do these things that only God could do (described in Job 40:9-13), neither could he **save** himself with his **own right hand**.

i. "In other words: Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; no man can save his own soul by works of righteousness which he *has* done, *is* doing, or *can* possibly do, to all eternity. Without Jesus every human spirit must have perished everlastingly. Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift!" (Clarke)

ii. "These verses are presented as an aggressive challenge to Job... But they are lovingly designed to shake Job's spirit into realizing God is the only Creator and the only Savior there is." (Smick)

3. (15-24) *An example of God's might and Job's relative weakness: Behemoth.*

"Look now at the behemoth, which I made *along* with you;

He eats grass like an ox.
See now, his strength *is* in his hips,
And his power *is* in his stomach muscles.
He moves his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
His bones *are like* beams of bronze,
His ribs like bars of iron.
He *is* the first of the ways of God;
Only He who made him can bring near His sword.
Surely the mountains yield food for him,
And all the beasts of the field play there.
He lies under the lotus trees,
In a covert of reeds and marsh.
The lotus trees cover him *with* their shade;
The willows by the brook surround him.
Indeed the river may rage,
Yet he is not disturbed;
He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,
Though he takes it in his eyes,
Or one pierces *his* nose with a snare."

a. **Look now at the behemoth:** God gave Job a remarkable survey of the wonders of creation in Job 38-39, including a look at many remarkable animals and their ways. Now lastly, God gives Job a look at two remarkable creatures: Behemoth (Job 40:15-24) and Leviathan (Job 41).

i. The precise identity of this animal named **behemoth** is debated. Most think God had in mind what we would call the hippopotamus, one of the largest, strongest, and most dangerous land creatures in the world.

b. **He eats grass like an ox... his power is in his stomach muscles:** God seems to rejoice in His own

creation as He describes the wonder of this remarkable animal noting its strength, size, appetite, and habits.

i. The picture is clear. If Job cannot contend with this fellow creature, how could he ever contend with the God who created the Behemoth?

Job 41:1 Can you catch Leviathan with a fishhook or tie his tongue down with a rope?

Job 41:2 Can you put a rope through his snout or put a hook through his jaws?

Job 41:3 Will he beg you to let him go? Will he plead with you for mercy?

Job 41:4 Will he make an agreement with you and promise to serve you forever?

Job 41:5 Will you tie him like a pet bird, like something to amuse your servant women?

Job 41:6 Will fishermen bargain over him? Will merchants cut him up to sell?

Job 41:7 Can you fill his hide with fishing spears or pierce his head with a harpoon?

Job 41:8 Touch him once and you'll never try it again; you'll never forget the fight!

Job 41:9 Anyone who sees Leviathan loses courage and falls to the ground.

Job 41:10 When he is aroused, he is fierce; no one would dare to stand before him.

Job 41:11 Who can attack him and still be safe? No one in all the world can do it.

Job 41:12 Let me tell you about Leviathan's legs and describe how great and strong he is.

Job 41:13 No one can tear off his outer coat or pierce the armor he wears.

Job 41:14 Who can make him open his jaws, ringed with those terrifying teeth?

Job 41:15 His back is made of rows of shields, fastened together and hard as stone.

Job 41:16 Each one is joined so tight to the next, not even a breath can come between.

Job 41:17 They all are fastened so firmly together that nothing can ever pull them apart.

Job 41:18 Light flashes when he sneezes, and his eyes glow like the rising sun.

Job 41:19 Flames blaze from his mouth, and streams of sparks fly out.

Job 41:20 Smoke comes pouring out of his nose, like smoke from weeds burning under a pot.

Job 41:21 His breath starts fires burning; flames leap out of his mouth.

Job 41:22 His neck is so powerful that all who meet him are terrified.

Job 41:23 There is not a weak spot in his skin; it is as hard and unyielding as iron.

Job 41:24 His stony heart is without fear, as unyielding and hard as a millstone.

Job 41:25 When he rises up, even the strongest are frightened; they are helpless with fear.

Job 41:26 There is no sword that can wound him; no spear or arrow or lance that can harm him.

Job 41:27 For him iron is as flimsy as straw, and bronze as soft as rotten wood.

Job 41:28 There is no arrow that can make him run; rocks thrown at him are like bits of straw.

Job 41:29 To him a club is a piece of straw, and he laughs when men throw spears.

Job 41:30 The scales on his belly are like jagged pieces of pottery; they tear up the muddy ground like a threshing sledge.

Job 41:31 He churns up the sea like boiling water and makes it bubble like a pot of oil.

Job 41:32 He leaves a shining path behind him and turns the sea to white foam.

Job 41:33 There is nothing on earth to compare with him; he is a creature that has no fear.

Job 41:34 He looks down on even the proudest animals; he is king of all wild beasts.

Job 41:1-34

Job 41 – God, Job, and Leviathan

A. Contending with Leviathan.

1. (1-7) Mankind is helpless against Leviathan.

**“Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook,
Or *snare* his tongue with a line *which* you lower?
Can you put a reed through his nose,
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?
Will he make many supplications to you?
Will he speak softly to you?
Will he make a covenant with you?
Will you take him as a servant forever?
Will you play with him as *with* a bird,
Or will you leash him for your maidens?
Will *your* companions make a banquet of him?
Will they apportion him among the merchants?
Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?**

a. **Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook:** After the discussion of *Behemoth* in Job 40:15-24, now God called Job to consider another fearful monster, **Leviathan**. This creature was first mentioned in Job 3:8; Job in that context considered how sailors and

fishermen would curse the threatening Leviathan, and with the same passion he cursed the day of his birth.

i. Usually **Leviathan** is considered to be a mythical sea-monster or dragon that terrorized sailors and fishermen. Yet in the context of Job 41, God does not seem to consider Leviathan to be mythical at all. Some believe that Leviathan describes some ancient dragon-like dinosaur that either survived to Job's day, or survived in the collective memory of mankind, so that God could refer to it as an example. Others consider that in this context, **Leviathan** is nothing more than a mighty crocodile.

ii. The name **Leviathan** means "*twisting one*" and is also used in other interesting places in Scripture.

- Psa 74:12-14 refers to Leviathan as a sea serpent, and that God broke the head of the Leviathan long ago, perhaps at the creation.

- Psa 104:26 also refers to Leviathan as a sea creature.

- Isa 27:1 speaks of the *future* defeat of Leviathan, also associating it with a *twisted serpent* that lives *in the sea*.

- Isa 51:9 and Psalm 89-8-10 also speak of a serpent associated with the sea that God defeated as a demonstration of His great strength, and identifies this serpent with the name *Rahab*, meaning *proud one*.

- Job 26:12-13 also refers to God's piercing defeat of a fleeing serpent associated with the sea.

b. **Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook:** God's point with this description of Leviathan is to show Job just how powerless he is

against this creature. There is nothing that Job can do against this mighty monster.

i. This makes the association between Leviathan – obviously, some dragon-type creature, even if it were in this context only a mighty crocodile – and Satan even more interesting. Satan is often represented as a dragon or a serpent (Genesis 3; Revelation 12, 13). Therefore, Leviathan may be another serpent-like manifestation of Satan.

ii. Indeed, as Adam Clarke says: “The Septuagint has *Axeis de drakonta*? ‘Canst thou draw out the dragon?’ The Syriac and the Arabic have the same.”

iii. Even as Job was powerless against Leviathan (as all men are), so he was also powerless against an unleashed Satan set against him. Only God could defeat Leviathan and Satan. “Satan may be typified here by behemoth and leviathan. Be that as it may, the question left with Job was this: ‘Canst thou?’ Thus he was called to the recognition of his own impotence in many directions, and at the same time to a remembrance of the power of God.” (Morgan)

2. (8-11) If mankind can't overpower Leviathan, it can't hope to overpower God.

Lay your hand on him;

Remember the battle;

Never do it again!

Indeed, *any* hope of *overcoming* him is false;

Shall *one not* be overwhelmed at the sight of him?

No one *is so* fierce that he would dare stir him up.

Who then is able to stand against Me?

Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him*?

Everything under heaven is Mine.”

a. **Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false:** Job could not hope to defeat Leviathan; it was simply beyond his power to do so.

b. **Who then is able to stand against Me:** The logical point is made. If Job cannot contend with Leviathan (or even with Satan, whom Leviathan represents), how could he ever hope to **stand against** the God who made and masters Leviathan? This was another effective way of setting Job in his proper place before God.

i. "Having now said and largely proved that man could not contend with God in power, he now adds, that he cannot do it in justice, because God oweth him nothing, nor is any way obliged to him." (Poole)

ii. There is a second, also important point: *that God Himself was master over Leviathan (**everything under heaven is Mine**)*. "By telling of his dominion over Behemoth and Leviathan, the Lord is illustrating what he has said in 40:8-14. He is celebrating his moral triumph over the forces of evil. Satan, the Accuser, has been proved wrong though Job does not know it. The author and the reader see the entire picture that Job and his friends never knew." (Smick)

B. The description of Leviathan.

1. (12-17) *The limbs and skin of Leviathan.*

**"I will not conceal his limbs,
His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.
Who can remove his outer coat?
Who can approach *him* with a double bridle?
Who can open the doors of his face,
With his terrible teeth all around?
His rows of scales are *his* pride,
Shut up tightly *as with* a seal;
One is so near another**

**That no air can come between them;
They are joined one to another,
They stick together and cannot be parted.**

a. **I will not conceal his limbs, his mighty power, or his graceful proportions:** To strengthen the point made in the previous section (that Job cannot stand against Leviathan, so he could not hope to stand against God), the LORD will now describe in greater detail the might and glory of this creature.

b. **Who can remove his outer coat... terrible teeth all around... rows of scales... joined one to another:** This description of Leviathan (especially with the rough, armor-like scaly skin and **terrible teeth all around**) makes some people believe that whatever Leviathan is in other Biblical and mythological contexts, here God had in mind a mighty crocodile.

i. John Trapp on **they are joined one to another, they stick together and cannot be parted:** "Let the saints strengthen themselves by close sticking the one to the other, as the primitive Christians did; so that the very heathens acknowledged that no people under heaven did so hold together and love one another as they."

2. (18-21) Fearful emanations from Leviathan.

**His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
Out of his mouth go burning lights;
Sparks of fire shoot out.
Smoke goes out of his nostrils,
As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes.
His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes out of his mouth.**

a. **His sneezings flash forth light... out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out:** *This* description of Leviathan seems definitely beyond that of a crocodile, and leads other commentators to believe that God had in mind much more than a currently known species.

b. **Smoke goes out of his nostrils... a flame goes out of his mouth:** This description of Leviathan seems much more like what we would think of as a *dragon*. Curiously, the dragon motif is common across cultures and lands, and may point to the actual existence of some creature of this type in pre-history. It may be to this common memory of this fire-breathing, reptilian creature that God refers.

i. "Those who regard these creatures as literal animals must admit that the description given here in Job is an exaggeration of the appearance and power of hippopotamuses and crocodiles." (Smick)

3. (22-34) *The might of Leviathan.*

**Strength dwells in his neck,
And sorrow dances before him.
The folds of his flesh are joined together;
They are firm on him and cannot be moved.
His heart is as hard as stone,
Even as hard as the lower *millstone*.
When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid;
Because of his crashings they are beside themselves.
Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;
Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.
He regards iron as straw,
And bronze as rotten wood.
The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones become like stubble to him.
Darts are regarded as straw;**

**He laughs at the threat of javelins.
His undersides *are* like sharp potsherds;
He spreads pointed *marks* in the mire.
He makes the deep boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
He leaves a shining wake behind him;
One would think the deep had white hair.
On earth there is nothing like him,
Which is made without fear.
He beholds every high *thing*;
He *is* king over all the children of pride."**

a. **Strength dwells in his neck, and sorrow dances before him:** In this last extended description of Leviathan, God spoke in terms that more closely connected the concept of Leviathan with Satan. It could be said of Satan as well as Leviathan (if not *more* so of Satan):

- They are strong (**Strength dwells in his neck**).
- They are cruel and entertained by sorrow (**sorrow dances before him**).
- They strongly defended (**the folds of his flesh are joined together; they are firm on him and cannot be moved**).
- They are unsympathetic and hard of heart (**His heart is as hard as stone**).
- They cause the mighty to fear (**When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid**).
- They cannot be successfully attacked (**Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail... he laughs at the threat of javelins**).
- They have few vulnerable spots (**His undersides are like sharp potsherds**).

- They have no worthy adversaries on earth (**On earth there is nothing like him**).

- They are filled with pride (**He is king over all the children of pride**).

- i. This also means that the description of *Behemoth* in the previous chapter may also be a representation of the strength and seeming confidence that the apparently unassailable Adversary has. "The use of the two names Behemoth and Leviathan is a poetic repetition, just as Psalms 74 refers to the breaking of the heads of the monster (*tanninim*) and the heads of Leviathan." (Smick)

- ii. "While it is true that Satan is never named outside the Prologue, this does not mean that the Lord never deals with him. He deals with him here in the form of Leviathan, describing him to Job with the same sort of symbolic picture-language He uses in

- Revelation.*" (Mason)

- b. **He is king over all the children of pride:** This description of Leviathan – especially at this point – is so like that of Satan, that we may fairly suppose that God here was indicating to Job not only His great might and Job's vulnerability before Satan, but also alluding to Satan's role in Job's great crisis.

- i. God called Job to consider these unconquerable beasts, who each in their own way were examples of Satan and his power. In this, God allowed Job to consider the fact that *he could not stand before the power of Satan without God empowering him*. Job thought that he was all alone through his ordeal; indeed he *felt* he was alone. Yet this was God's way of saying that he was *not* alone, because if he were,

then he surely would have crumbled before the power of Leviathan and Behemoth.

ii. "Jonah was swallowed by a whale; but the believer in Jesus Christ swallows the whale. We eat Leviathan for breakfast. It takes a very big God, and a very big faith in God, to be able to absorb so much evil. Leviathan seems to be endlessly sprawling, gargantuan, invincible. But the essence of the gospel is that the love of God is greater than any evil." (Mason)

iii. God ends His words to Job *without ever telling him the story behind the story*. Job was left ignorant about the contest between God and Satan that prompted his whole crisis (though perhaps God later told him). Though Job did not know the whole story, God did tell him of His great victory over Leviathan/Satan, giving Job assurance for the past, the present, and for the future.

iv. It was *important* that God did not tell Job the reasons why; then Job can be a continuing comfort and inspiration and example to those who suffer with an explanation. "Once again we emphasize that if the specific and ultimate reason for his suffering had been revealed to Job – even at this point – the value of the account as a comfort to others who must suffer in ignorance would have been diminished if not cancelled." (Smick)

Job's Confession and Repentance

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD.

Job 42:2 I know, LORD, that you are all-powerful; that you can do everything you want.

Job 42:3 You ask how I dare question your wisdom when I am so very ignorant. I talked about things I did not

understand, about marvels too great for me to know.

Job 42:4 You told me to listen while you spoke and to try to answer your questions.

Job 42:5 In the past I knew only what others had told me, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

Job 42:6 So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes.

The Lord Rebukes Job's Friends

Job 42:7 After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, the way my servant Job did.

Job 42:8 Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you the way you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did."

Job 42:9 Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did what the LORD had told them to do, and the LORD answered Job's prayer.

The Lord Restores Job's Fortunes

Job 42:10 Then, after Job had prayed for his three friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had had before.

Job 42:11 All Job's brothers and sisters and former friends came to visit him and feasted with him in his house. They expressed their sympathy and comforted him for all the troubles the LORD had brought on him. Each of them gave him some money and a gold ring.

Job 42:12 The LORD blessed the last part of Job's life even more than he had blessed the first. Job owned fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, two thousand head of cattle, and one thousand donkeys.

Job 42:13 He was the father of seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:14 He called the oldest daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the youngest Keren Happuch.

Job 42:15 There were no other women in the whole world as beautiful as Job's daughters. Their father gave them a share of the inheritance along with their brothers.

Job 42:16 Job lived a hundred and forty years after this, long enough to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Job 42:17 And then he died at a very great age.

Job 42:1-17

Job 42 – Job's Repentance and Restoration

A. Job's repentance.

1. (1-3) Job confesses his presumption and lack of knowledge.

Then Job answered the LORD and said:

"I know that You can do everything,

And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

a. **I know that You can do everything:** This wonderful statement from Job was obviously connected to the impressive display of the power and might of God over creation; but it was also connected to the *comfort* that the sense of the presence of God brought to Job. God indeed could **do everything**, including bring comfort and assurance to Job, even when Job still did not understand the origin or meaning of his crisis.

b. And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You: The God who can master Behemoth and Leviathan (Job 40, 41) can also accomplish every purpose in Job's life, including the mysterious meaning behind the twists and turns.

c. I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know: Job said many sad and imprudent things, both in his agonized cry of Job 3 and in the bitter and contentious debate with his friends. At times he doubted the goodness of God and His righteous judgment in the world; at times he doubted if there was any good in this life or in the life beyond. Now Job has come full circle, back to a state of humble contentment with *not knowing* the answers to the questions occasioned by his crisis and his companions.

i. "Job felt that what he had spoken concerning the Lord was in the main true; and the Lord himself said to Job's three friends, 'Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath'; but under a sense of the divine presence Job felt that even when he had spoken aright, he had spoken beyond his own proper knowledge, uttering speech whose depths of meaning he could not himself fathom." (Spurgeon)

ii. Job's thinking here is well expressed by one of the shortest psalms, Psalms 131 :

*LORD, my heart is not haughty,
Nor my eyes lofty.
Neither do I concern myself with great matters,
Nor with things too profound for me.
Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

*O Israel, hope in the LORD
From this time forth and forever.*

2. (4-6) Job repents before God.

**Listen, please, and let me speak; You said,
'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'**"

**"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I abhor *myself*,
And repent in dust and ashes."**

a. **Listen, please, and let me speak:** Before, Job seemed to want to challenge God (Job 31:35-40) in a confrontational way. Now, after his wonderful revelation of God, He respectfully asked God for the right to **speak**.

b. **I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You:** This reminds us that the most powerful aspect of Job's encounter with God was not primarily what God said; but God's simple, loving, powerful presence with Job that changed him most profoundly.

i. *Seeing* God – not with his literal eye, but in a way literally real – gave Job what he so wanted: *to know that God was with him in his crisis*. This wonderful presence of God has humbled Job.

ii. We should not assume that what Job knew of God was necessarily *false*; yet each fresh and deeper revelation of God has a brightness that makes previous experience of God seem rather pale. What he had just experienced was so real, it made his previous experiences seem unreal.

c. **Therefore I abhor myself:** It is important to understand each phrase of this statement of Job's. This would seem to be the normal conviction of sin that even a saint like Job senses in the presence of God; yet there

is good evidence that Job, with this statement, was really formally retracting his previous statements made in ignorance.

i. "The verb translated 'I despise myself (Job 42:6) could be rendered 'I reject what I said.'" (Smick)

ii. "The Hebrew word literally means, from the standpoint of etymology, to disappear; from the standpoint of usage, to retract, to repudiate. As a matter of fact, Job at this point went beyond what he had previously said when he declared, 'I am of small account,' and declared that he practically cancelled himself entirely. I disappear, I retract all that has been said; I repudiate the position I have taken up." (Morgan)

iii. "*I despise* (and translations usually supply *myself* as the object not found in the Hebrew). This does not go as far as the abject self-loathing of that radical repentance that requires admitting known sins. If we are to connect it with verse 3, Job could be expressing regret at his foolish words, uttered hastily and in ignorance." (Andersen)

d. **And repent in dust and ashes:** It was right for Job to repent. He had done nothing to invite the crisis that came into his life; the reasons for that crisis were rooted in the contention between God and Satan as recorded in Job 1, 2. Yet he did have to repent of his wrong words and wrong attitude *after* the crisis; both for excessively giving in to despair in Job 3, and for his unwise and intemperate speech as he contended with his companions.

i. It is important to note that Job *did not* give in to his friends and admit that they had been right all along. That simply was not true. The sins Job repented of here were both *general sins*, common to all men,

which seemed all the darker in the presence of God, yet were not the cause of the catastrophe that came into his life; and they were sins committed *after* the catastrophe came.

ii. What did Job have to repent of? In his sermon, *Job Among the Ashes*, Charles Spurgeon suggested several things:

- Job repented of the terrible curse he had pronounced upon the day of his birth.
- Job repented of his desire to die.
- Job repented of his complaints against and challenges to God.
- Job repented of his despair.
- Job repented that his statements had been a “darkening of wisdom by words without knowledge”; that he spoke beyond his knowledge and ability to know.

iii. One might say that these words of Job – words of humble repentance and submission before God for sins that were greatly provoked, sins that come from the godly and not from the wicked – these words that contain no curse of God whatsoever – these words ended the contest between God and Satan and demonstrated that the victory belonged to God and to Job.

iv. God’s confidence in Job’s faith was completely vindicated. “Job is vindicated in a faith in God’s goodness that has survived a terrible deprivation and, indeed, grown in scope, unsupported by Israel’s historical creed or the mighty acts of God, unsupported by life in the covenant community, unsupported by cult institutions, unsupported by revealed knowledge from the prophets, unsupported

by tradition, and contradicted by experience. Next to Jesus, Job must surely be the greatest believer in the whole Bible.” (Andersen)

v. Simply put, “Without anger toward him, God allowed Job to suffer in order to humiliate the Accuser and provided support to countless sufferers who would follow in Job’s footsteps.” (Smick) This was now accomplished.

B. Job’s restoration.

1. (7-9) Job’s friends are rebuked; Job is vindicated

And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me *what is right*, as My servant Job *has*. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you *according to your folly*; because you have not spoken of Me *what is right*, as My servant Job *has*.” So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job.

a. My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends: God rebuked Job’s three companions, addressing Eliphaz as their head (he was the first of the three to speak).

i. Curiously, Elihu is not addressed by God in this final chapter. Some people think this is because Elihu was correct in what he said and was indeed God’s messenger to Job. Taking into account exactly what

Elihu said, it is better to think that God did not answer him as a way of dismissing him altogether.

ii. "He is therefore punished (as ambassadors are used to be when they commit undecencies) with silence, which is the way royal to correct a wrong." (Trapp)

b. You have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has: The friends of Job spoke many general principles that, in their setting, have great wisdom. The problem was that in Job's circumstance, their principles of wisdom did not apply. They presented God as *angry* and *judgmental* against Job, when *He was not*. This displeased God.

i. It displeased God so much that He specifically repeated the charge (Job 42:8); He commanded them to sacrifice a **burnt offering** to make atonement for their sin; and He commanded them to humble themselves and ask Job to **pray for** them.

ii. We can imagine that they were quite surprised by this. They no doubt thought that God was in agreement with them all along. "And yet they seemed to be all for God; and to plead his cause against Job throughout. But as in some things they were much mistaken, so they had their self-respects, and were much biased in their discourses." (Trapp)

iii. God's rebuke of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar was at the same time an explicit vindication of Job. It was true that in his frustration, stubbornness, and misery Job said things that he had to repent of. Yet God could still say of him, "**as My servant Job has,**" putting forth Job as an example of one who spoke **what is right**.

c. So Eliphaz... Bildad... and Zophar... went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job: The friends of Job were accepted for

Job's sake, because **the LORD had accepted Job**. God made Job a mediator to his friends. This must have been a humbling and instructive experience for the friends, and a happy and healing experience for Job.

i. "These men did not say, 'No, we will not go to Job'; they did not attempt to justify themselves, they did exactly what God told them to, and in so doing they did a grand and noble thing, and took the only chance of getting to know God." (Chambers)

ii. "They had attempted to restore Job by philosophy. They had failed. He was now to restore them by prayer. The bands of his own captivity were broken, moreover, in the activity of prayer on behalf of others." (Morgan)

iii. "Job was permitted to take a noble revenge, I am sure the only one he desired, when he became the means of bringing them back to God. God would not hear them, he said, for they had spoken so wrongly of his servant Job, and now Job is set to be a mediator, or intercessor on their behalf: thus was the contempt poured upon the patriarch turned into honor." (Spurgeon)

2. (10-11) Job is blessed and received by his friends again.

And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him.

Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

a. **And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends:** God was good enough to restore Job's wealth to him, *even though Job never asked for this*. Job's agony was always more rooted in the more spiritual aspects of his crisis, much more than the material. Yet once the spiritual was resolved, God restored the material.

i. As the margin in the New King James Version notes, this can also be translated, *and the LORD turned the captivity of Job*. This is a suggestive phrase; that the act of praying for his friends and restoring his relationship with them in a sense freed Job from captivity.

ii. It does not say that God turned the *poverty* of Job, nor the *health* of Job, nor his *friendships*; rather, literally, He *turned the captivity of Job*. A man may be poor, sick, and friendless without being captive. Yet until Job had a revelation of God; until he humbled himself before God; until he brought atonement to his friends and prayed for them, he was still in *captivity*.

iii. This happened *after* Job's relationship with his friends was restored (**when he prayed for his friends**). It would have been a weak restoration if Job's relationship with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar remained as contentious and bitter as it was during their debate.

b. **Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house:** Job was once an outcast, even from his own family (as described in Job 19:13-14). Now these relationships were restored.

i. It is interesting to notice that **they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him**, and this was even *after* his losses were restored, his captivity was released. "It is worth dwelling on the fact that, even when everything is set right, Job still feels the hurt of his losses, and needs human comfort for them." (Andersen)

ii. They also gave him generous gifts (**a piece of silver and each a ring of gold**); probably more to honor his greatness than to make it. "Partly to make up his former losses, and partly as a testimony of their honourable respect to him." (Poole)

3. (12-17) The happy end to the story of Job.

Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.

a. **Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning:** In the beginning of the story of Job we find a blessed and godly man; at the end of the Book of Job we find a man *more blessed* and *more godly*. In the end, all the attack of Satan served to make Job a more blessed and more godly man.

i. "Our sorrows shall have an end when God has gotten his end in them. The ends in the case of Job were these, that Satan might be defeated, foiled with his own weapons, blasted in his hopes when he had everything his own way." (Spurgeon)

ii. Job had doubled his possessions under the blessing of God and doubled his children also. "Job had the number of his children doubled; for they are ours still whom we have sent to heaven before us." (Trapp)

iii. We can also see, as Mason suggests, this chapter as an example of the work of revival.

- God's people are convicted of their sin (**I abhor myself**).

- God's people are broken and repentant (**repent in dust and ashes**).

- God speaks to hard hearts and they listen (**the LORD said to Eliphaz**).

- God's people pray for others and God answers (**Job shall pray for you**).

- God's people obey God (**Eliphaz... Bildad... and Zophar... went and did as the Lord commanded them**).

- God's people are united and jubilant (**all his brothers, all his sisters... came to him and ate food with him in his house**).

- God's people are blessed (**the LORD blessed**).

b. **He also had seven sons and three daughters:** Nothing could replace the children Job so tragically lost in Job 1; yet these ten children were of true consolation. It also is some evidence that Job's relationship with his wife was restored to goodness as before.

i. The **daughters of Job** were also uniquely blessed, noted as being **beautiful**, and having an **inheritance among their brothers**. There was, no doubt, some connection between Job's godly conduct as a family man (Job 31:1-4; Job 31:9-12) and this blessing on his **daughters**.

ii. The names of the **daughters of Job** are of some interest.

- **Jemimah**: "Turtledove" or "Day-bright."
- **Keziah**: "Cinnamon" or "Cassia," a fragrant scent.
- **Keren-Happuch**: "A Jar of Eye Paint" or "Horn of Beauty"; the idea was that she was so beautiful that she *needed* no cosmetics.

c. **Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations... Job died, old and full of days**: Job's life ended long and blessed. He was well rewarded as a warrior who won a great battle for God's glory.

i. According to Adam Clarke, the idea behind **full of days** is that Job died when he was "satisfied with this life." "Job is now as willing to die as ever he was to dine; he is satisfied with days, saith the text, not as meat loathed, but as a dish, though well liked, that he had fed his full of." (Trapp)

ii. "The greatest, the most important purposes were accomplished by this trial. Job became a much better man than he ever was before; the dispensations of God's providence were illustrated and justified; Satan's devices unmasked; patience crowned and rewarded; and the church of God greatly enriched by having bequeathed to it the vast treasury of divine truth which is found in the Book of Job." (Clarke)

iii. "In this great Book there is no solution of problems. There is a great revelation. It is that God may call men into fellowship with Himself through suffering; and that the strength of the human soul is ever that of the knowledge of God." (Morgan)

iv. "We are not all like Job, but we all have Job's God. Though we have neither risen to Job's wealth, nor will, probably, ever sink to Job's poverty, yet there is the same God above us if we be high, and the same God with his everlasting arms beneath us if we be brought low; and what the Lord did for Job he will do for us, not precisely in the same form, but in the same spirit, and with like design." (Spurgeon)